

HARVARD ORIENTAL SERIES

Opera Minora

VOL. 1

TRANSLATING, TRANSLATIONS, TRANSLATORS
FROM INDIA TO THE WEST

EDITED BY

ENRICA GARZILLI



CAMBRIDGE 1996

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Edited by
MICHAEL WITZEL

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Collection.
Courtesy of Dr. E. Fischer, Director, Museum Rietberg,
Zürich.

The image on the cover represents a fragmented sculpture called *Bhikṣāṭana*. It belongs to the Haihaya (Cheḍi) Dynasty, Madhya Pradesh (X cent.). It shows Śiva as the Supreme Beggar. His sensuous body presents the god as the wives and daughters of the sages saw him. *Bhikṣāṭana* is represented in this sculpture as seen and desired by them. This image was chosen because it evokes, in the voluptuous bend of the God's body, the sensuality and tense expressiveness of many representations of Greek gods. It can very well symbolize the continuous stream of cultural exchanges and dialogue between Western and Eastern worlds.

Enrica Garzilli

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February 1992

To- Dr. Manjivan Rastogi,
Looking forward to
meeting you -

Lucre Perrelli

PREFACE

This volume opens the new series *Opera Minora* of the *Harvard Oriental Series*, as has been announced in its vol. 50. After more than a hundred years of existence, I think, even a respectable series such as the *HOS*, is in need of some *aggiornamento*.

In this new series, we plan to publish, in fairly inexpensive form, conference volumes, such as the present one on Translation, which is the result of the brief conference we held at Harvard in May 1994. The idea came from Dr. Enrica Garzilli who also planned and organized this successful symposium. Subsequently, she assembled and edited the contributions made during the conference, invited other well known scholars to participate in the volume and took over the edition of these contributions as well. In brief, she has conceived, planned, and edited the conference and the present inaugural volume of the *Opera Minora*, of which she has functioned as the Editor. She has also functioned as the Editor of the whole Series *Opera Minora*.

I wish to thank her for all of her efforts in this regard. She has persevered, often under very difficult conditions, in bringing out this volume. Dr. Garzilli has also worked on, and brought much closer to conclusion, another conference volume, the proceedings of the "International Vedic Workshop at Harvard" of 1989; the book is in final proof stage now and will be published shortly.

In *Opera Minora*, we further plan to print reports, for example of excavations in the Kathmandu Valley, by T. Riccardi. Occasionally, we may also include a preliminary edition (such as that of the *Paippalāda Saṃhitā* of the *Atharvaveda*); or, in installments, manuscript and other catalogues, such as those of the Harvard collection of Sanskrit manuscripts brought together by F. Hall and Ch. Lanman. A descriptive catalogue of the *jyotiṣa* section has been completed by D. Pingree and will be published soon. We may also publish some reprints of the more expensive *HOS* volumes for the use of students, such as the long out of print translation of the *R̥gveda* by K. F. Geldner.

Finally, we hope to initiate in the new series reprints of the *Opera Minora* of American Indologists. Each volume will be a collection of the articles of a single scholar which have been published, often beyond easy access, in various journals in America, Europe and India. Like its German counterpart, the *Glaserapp Series* of *Kleine Schriften*, we hope that the new series will not just facilitate our own work, but that it will also stimulate reading and discussion of the often stupendous volume and depth of work that our predecessors have carried out, which work, however, tends to become increasingly overlooked in an academic climate that is increasingly geared to quick, fashionable, and trendy production.

Michael Witzel

INTRODUCTION

A one day Symposium was held at Harvard University on the 13th of May, 1994. It was organized by the editor of this volume under the sponsorship of the Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies, of which Prof. Michael Witzel was the Chairman. Special guest of the Symposium was the philosopher Williard V. O. Quine. This Symposium was entitled "Translations, Translating, Translators: From India to the West". It was a response to a need common to all translators, either student, professional, or amateur: how to translate not only language, but the culture conveyed by that language and expressed through it.

Language is above all a means of communication, but there are many other means of communication. Especially written communication expresses not only the culture, but the thoughts of people; therefore, it is not only born by its culture, it is the bearer of it. The more one thinks the more one needs to clarify and express one's thoughts; and vice versa, the more one consciously speaks, the more one's thoughts are clarified and expressed. In the case of written thoughts, one leaves a document of what his/her thoughts were and/or are, and how they reflect the whole of self-reflections and also of customs, gestures, lifestyle, history, climate, everything present in the writer and his/her environment at that time. It also bears the past and the future: what people inherit, hope, suffer, enjoy, wish, dream. Language expresses and carries also the **imaginary world** of people. Language reaches out to our imagination.

That is precisely the difficulty of translating cultures such as the Indian one. A translator should translate an imaginary world so different from the Western, modern, capitalistic world, especially if this world belongs to centuries, or millennia ago. The translator should translate this world to make it "readable" to us, living now, with a totally different economy, customs, political systems, life expectation, means of communications, and taste in conveying also universal and eternal feelings and thoughts.

In translating from Sanskrit, Vedic, Tibetan or vernaculars into contemporary Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, -- these were the languages used for these contributions -- one is transposing images and their relation with the world of the writer into another world distant in culture, time and space. And still, even supposing that the translator has "understood" the mind of the writer and has translated his/her world into the words of another world, there is a residue of language that is untranslatable: it is the undefinable scent that poetry has. Another problem is to be added, that only poets themselves can really solve. To translate is not only to transpose words from one world to another, is to restore the form, the sound, the structure, the taste of a text to life. To give it a new history.

To use Ingeborg Bachmann's words:

.....

*Und nur nicht dies: das Bild
im Staubgespinst, leeres Geroll
von Silben, Sterbenswörter.*

*Kein Sterbenswort,
Ihr Worte!*

* * *

In this volume, each of the contributors has tried to answer the many questions which arise while translating a text or a long chapter of a work from an Indian language into a Western one. He/she often starts with the restoration of the text to be translated. The prerequisite to speak at the Symposium, and to contribute to this volume, was to have already published a translation considered *per se*. It is very different to consider a piece of written work as part of a larger study, or as a work itself. It obliges the translator to enter the mind, the time, the location of the speaker, and not only to use his/her words to demonstrate and support or confutate a thesis. Each contribution refers to a published translation.

This volume collects the papers, some of them re-elaborated, from seven speakers at the Symposium on Translation from widely ranging cultural spheres, America, Europe, and India (E. Garzilli, D. Martin, D. Pingree, S. Pollock, H. Resnick, A. Sharma, M. Witzel), and seven scholars from Europe and India (W. Callewaert, T. Goudriaan, K. van Kooij, S. Lienhard, A. Padoux, A. Passi, D. Sensharma).

The following papers can be considered as a critical interpretative apparatus which refer to the theme of translation in general, as an introduction to the study of a single translation, or as a first answer to the many problems which occurred in facing any translation. The papers generally introduce the reader, step-by-step, to the complex labor of restoring a text, understanding it, and making it accessible to others, the targeted audience. Among the contributions there is also an "active" example of translation: it dynamically illustrates the result of the process of translating.

The articles have been arranged in alphabetical order by the names of the authors; for each author a short bibliographical note is presented at the end of this volume.

Winand Callewaert offers a study on translating *Santa* literature, the medieval Northern mystic songs and aphorisms written in vernacular. This corpus was originally only sung and later written down around 1600 A.D. Callewaert's paper gives an overview of all the problems connected in translating an old Indian language: how to find manuscripts, how to edit them taking into account the variants introduced during the period of the oral transmission, and how to

translate them.

With the paper of Enrica Garzilli, we move from religious poetry to philosophy. She investigates the problems that occurred in the translation of a twelfth-century short philosophical treatise in Sanskrit, belonging to one of the schools of the Trika system of Kaśmīr. In doing so, she has regarded translating as a historically determined, therefore, dynamic way to communicate the world of an author (who is historically determined himself/herself) to another world: from the speaker, through the translator's words, to the reader. This process, especially in the case of a philosophical work, guides the translator himself/herself to a better understanding of his/her own words -- namely thoughts.

The paper of Teun Goudriaan deals with Buddhist, Shivaite, and Vishnuite hymns. They have been partially written in spurious Sanskrit by Balinese Brahman priests. The work of Goudriaan was preparing critical texts of the already present material and translating it. The peculiar language of the group of hymns written in "the total lack of grammatical coherence" obliged the author of the translation to formulate a set of twelve characteristic features before translating them. Nevertheless, the author admits that only a tentative translation was possible: still, it is worthwhile, because "these texts have a meaning based upon religious insights or convictions".

Karel van Kooij re-examines his translation of a Sanskrit *śākta Upapurāṇa* of the 10th-11th century A.D. that he published some twenty-three years ago. The author explains the motives he had to translate this text, and his present reasons to look back at it: this offers an interesting insight of the mixture of scholarly and personal reasons which might move a curious mind to afford such a difficult task of translating a Sanskrit text. After that, van Kooij discusses some of the textual problems he found when he "tried" to translate the text. The last part of the paper gives remarks on the reason for which the text is particularly known, namely its ritual violence.

Siegfried Lienhard's paper investigates the two possible readings of the verses of the Sanskrit court-poet Amaru. Just like in the case of his contemporary Kālidāsa, the fame which surrounded Amaru created an un-reliable number of anecdotes and amusing legends on him. The erotic and philosophical readings of Amaru's verses created the story of the interchangeability of the poet with the philosopher Śaṅkara. Lienhard, translating in this paper just one verse of the work, shows us how this double-entendre is possible, and how the work could have been intentionally composed in an ambiguous way by a poet who wanted to present to his readers a poem composed in the sense of Amaru as well as that of Śaṅkara.

In his paper Dan Martin does not only consider his translation of the twelfth-century Tibetan verse compendium of Zhang Rinpoche under a philological point of view, but analyzes the work's problems of context and individuality. He locates the author in his peculiar Buddhist cultural

context, and shows how much the scholar should know about time and life of the author before even thinking of translating his/her work. Moreover, Martin's paper demonstrates that we should interpret and respect the spirit and the creativity of the author before translating his/her text, that in any case reflects an original re-interpretation of his/her context.

André Padoux's contribution sheds light on his translation of a Sanskrit Tantric work belonging to the Southern *kaula* tradition. Giving examples of words common in the text, Padoux shows that, even supposing the transposition from the Sanskrit linguistic code to the French one, into which Padoux translated the text, "to be possible without too much loss of meaning or without too great a discrepancy between what the original says and what the translation conveys", even in this case it is all the more difficult by the "often widely different areas of meaning" between Sanskrit and French words. These areas are in fact representative of entirely different cultures.

Alessandro Passi's paper deals with his translation of a Buddhist Sanskrit *kāvya* of the 1st cent. A.D. When Passi published his work, he tried to remain "within the bounds of a verse by verse prose version in contemporary Italian, intended for a general public". Now, he shows us how much his work would be different from the published one, giving us a modern metrical translation of some stanzas. In doing so, he deals with translation theory and poetic Sanskrit translation, making clear that there are "two added dimensions of complexity" in the latter case. There is "In the first place, the high communication load of poetic language". "Secondly, the formal structure of rhythm and meter". The translator should establish an adequate medium for translation, taking into account the whole of this dimension.

With David Pingree we have the fortunate opportunity to follow the process of translating a text quite different from the others, a scientific one. He deals with a poem on mathematical astronomy, composed in Sanskrit in the middle of the sixth century A.D., that summarizes the contents of five earlier astronomical text-books. The difficulty of translating this text is due to the previous knowledge of Babylonian and Greek astronomy that had entered the Indian system, knowledge that the author of the Sanskrit text did not have. The result is that the descriptions of these systems given in the text "are often mistaken or misleading". Working on the often corrupted manuscripts, it was necessary for Pingree to re-write the text: work that a translator always more or less does -- just like a player always more or less re-writes music written by another composer.

With Sheldon Pollock we come back to literary theory and poetic Sanskrit translation. Pollock's paper deals with his translations of two books of one of the great Indian epics. After making a short survey of South Asian translation, he discusses the features specific to Sanskrit poetry, which makes "understanding and translating it an activity subject to specific constraints, where conscious reflection and modest

conceptualization do have some role to play". The author specifies the two main sets of principles that informed his own translation: the "philological respect for the long history of reading in South Asia itself, and the tradition of exegesis and appreciation it comprises"; and "the literary, and more generally cultural, aspects of literary translation".

The paper of Howard Resnick expresses a peculiar point of view. Since 1969 he has been a member of the religious Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava movement (ISKCON). Currently Resnick, under the initiatic name of Hridayananda D. Goswami, is the Minister for Academic Affairs in the ISKCON. His translation from Sanskrit of one of the most important texts of the religious movement to which he belongs has to be put within the interpretative boundaries of the spiritual line of his teachers, the *paramparā*. "A Vaiṣṇava must accept and repeat the words of the *paramparā* teachers in order to be recognized as a member of the *sampradāya*, the authorized spiritual community. Similarly, only a proven member of the *sampradāya* will be eligible to represent the *paramparā*". This adhesion to spiritual tradition can be a limit for scholarly translation; it can also be a benefit to the too often dry and scholastic interpretative main-frame of any translation.

Both Sensharma and Sharma's contributions deal with Trika subjects. Debabrata Sensharma offers us a dynamic example of translating. In his paper he gives the translation of twenty-one verses of a very popular Sanskrit text, that perhaps belongs to the second half of the 17th century. It deals with the theory of cosmogony according to the *śaiva advaita* school of Kaśmīr and it is presented together with the translation of its own commentary. The almost exclusive use of technical terms, characteristic of that philosophical system, and the verse structure, make the text a real "steeplechase". With Sensharma's we have a successful example that is not enough to know Sanskrit in general, as a language, to make us accessible words and the whole of concepts and cultural references they resort to and express. Only somebody with a long experience in reading and translating in this field, can make us know such an elaborated and sophisticated world of ideas and religiosity.

Arvind Sharma deals with his translation of the Sanskrit commentary of the great Trika philosopher Abhinavagupta (born in Kaśmīr in the 10th cent. A.D.) on the *Bhagavadgītā*. Due to the seminal importance of the text itself and the prominence of the commentator, the translation has presupposed many questions on the real meaning of both words. Is the *Gītā*, charged of "a philosophical space as well a cultural space" in the Hindu tradition (and I should say in the cultural tradition of human beings), "meant to be univalent or multivalent"? "It is supposed to possess only one (preferably correct) meaning or is it supposed to possess many meanings?" Sharma concludes that, in order to answer these questions, the translator share the mind-set of the author.

The last paper of this volume in many respects summarizes much of the reasoning, questions and answers given by the other contributors. In an accessible approach, Michael Witzel expounds how it is possible to

restore a text originally composed orally by Brahmins for Brahmins that was composed during the late Vedic period in Vedic, or Archaic Sanskrit. Therefore, it presents, in comparison with classical Sanskrit texts, peculiarities and ambiguity of words and language, style, and literary structure. Witzel goes further: he asserts that "we can actually enter the Vedic mind and argue from the inside, following the thought pattern of the Vedic authors", in order to translate a text; just as it was possible for him to restore the text itself using the manuscript he had, filling out by himself the lacuna the text had. He concludes that "if we can write Vedic texts that well, we can also translate them".

* * *

In conclusion, I would like to make one further remark: some contributors, and surely myself, have underlined that theirs was an attempt at translating subject to further changes, ameliorations, and improvements of any kind. Translating, especially if it is the first translation of the text, involves always a large amount of risk. It is a work in progress. We only try to do our best.

The imperfection of any piece of translation, and the often many possibilities of doing something different are the beauty, the essence, and the open space of any humanistic study.

* * *

I entitled this Series *Opera Minora* after the many homonymous series, in many languages, that have been valued by scholars from all over the world. I hope our Series will encounter the same appreciation.

I should like to thank all those who have in some way helped me in this inaugural work.

I thank all the authors of the following contributions: without them this volume would have simply been impossible.

I thank Prof. Michael Witzel for supporting this publication and for giving me the opportunity of working on it and on the whole Series *Opera Minora*. His zeal and his devotion to Indological studies have guided me, and have been a constant source of human and scholarly support during all these years. I also thank him for his translation of Lienhard's paper from the German.

I thank Carlos Lopez, Ph.D. candidate at the Sanskrit and Indian Studies Dept. (Harvard University), for patiently reading the whole volume.

I thank Arch. Dr. Ludovico Magnocavallo for taking care of the layout of the text, and for his many technical suggestions and solutions

for the Index and the graphic of the whole Series.

Finally, I thank my daughter Andrea Rachele Fiore, travelling companion: her presence, her grace, her intelligence, her beauty, her courage, her wit, her style, sustained and cheered me up at every moment of my life.

To her, this small work is dedicated.

Enrica Garzilli
Harvard University
Cambridge, 30th of June, 1995

ABBREVIATIONS

ABORI	: <i>Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Institute</i>
Amṛt	: Amṛtānanda
AŚ	: <i>Amaruśātaka</i>
B.E.F.E.O.	: <i>Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient</i>
BORI	: Bhandarkar Oriental Institute
Ca	: Calcutta
CC	: <i>Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī</i> , by Swami. A. C. B. (Los Angeles, The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust Publishing, 1974-1975)
Dī	: <i>Dīpikā</i>
HOS	: <i>Harvard Oriental Series</i>
Ind. T.	: <i>Indologica Taurinensia</i>
IUO	: Istituto Universitario Orientale
JAS	: <i>Journal of the Asiatic Society</i>
JAOS	: <i>Journal of American Oriental Society</i>
JB	: <i>Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa</i>
Kaṭhā	: <i>Kaṭha Āraṇyaka</i>
KSTS	: <i>Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies</i>
Ma	: Marburg
M.I.T.	: Massachusetts Institute of Technology
NIB	: <i>Nanda il bello</i> , tr. A. Passi (Milano, Adelphi, 1985)
RV	: <i>Rgveda</i>
ŚB	: <i>Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa</i>
ŚB	: <i>Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam</i>
SN	: <i>The Saundarananda of Aśvaghoṣa</i> , crit. ed. with notes by E. H. Johnston (London 1928, Delhi 1975)
SNT	: <i>The Saundarananda or Nanda the Fair</i> , tr. E. H. Johnston (London 1932, Delhi 1975)
SOL	: <i>Studi Orientali e Linguistici</i>
TĀ	: <i>Taittirīya Āraṇyaka</i>
Tü	: Tübingen
YH	: <i>Yoginīhṛdaya</i>
YV	: <i>Yajurveda</i>
VVRI	: Vishveshvaranand Vedic Research Institute
WZKS	: <i>Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens</i>
ZDMG	: <i>Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>

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Translating *Santa* Literature (North-India, 1400-1700 A.D.)

by
Winand M. Callewaert

A good translation of *Santa* literature is not only a contribution to a better understanding and appreciation of another culture, or personally a satisfying enterprise: it is also a challenge that requires skills of different kinds. The songs of Nāmdev, Kabīr, Raidās, Dādū and other Saints in Northern India were written down from 1600 A.D. onwards and had been passed on during longer or shorter periods of oral transmission, exerting a great influence on the life of the masses. In their songs and aphorisms the mystics preached their reaction against the brahmanical ritual beliefs and the caste system, and advocated a pure, monotheistic faith. The language they used was no longer Sanskrit, but the vernacular. I see mainly three obstacles to be overcome in the scenic mountains of this lyrical-mystical literature.

1. The challenge of research in this area is first the fact that little of this literature has been critically edited and is only accessible in manuscripts. Second, the "classical" stemmatic approach for a critical edition has to be modified, and third, the language in which these songs were sung has been studied only imperfectly, -- although a lot of progress has been made in the last 20 years. The result of my research has not only been the preservation of decaying manuscripts (on film) and the critical editions; my study has also made possible an innovation in the handling of texts preserved in manuscripts. It has done this by emphasizing the oral aspect of the variants found in manuscripts. With this approach one can -- for this literature -- abandon the traditional "stemmatic" method and look for variants introduced into the repertoires during the period of oral transmission. As a result critical editing is no longer only a reconstruction of an "archetype". The distinction between "oral" recensions allows the scholar to go back further in history than what a scribal stemma would allow.

1.1 Inaccessibility of the sources

The songs of these mystic reformers were sung, and only around 1600 A.D. they were written down. Hence, since we have no recordings of the period, our only way to the original "sung" version is through a comparison of manuscripts now scattered all over the region, often in remote villages. For the last 20 years this search for manuscripts has taken me all over Rajasthan, as well as to Delhi, Benares, Punjab, Pune and even Thanjavur. Every year I discover new -- often private -- collections with ancient material and along with my increasing databank of *bhakti* literature on film¹ grows also my conviction that preservation

¹ For the manuscripts on film in Leuven, see *IAVRI Bulletin*, London, IV, Oct.

of manuscripts and critical text-editions are a first priority for a student of Indian culture. Now it is less difficult -- with the appearance of photocopying machines -- to copy manuscripts, but it still remains an enterprise of patience, endurance and diplomacy. When my dear and respected friend G. N. Bahurāji, Jaipur, told me in 1973 that the history of *bhakti* literature would have to be rewritten if all the material of the City Palace, Jaipur could be made available, he spoke only half a truth: so much manuscript material is still "preserved" all over Rajasthan and Panjab, that all of us have enough to keep ourselves fruitfully occupied for several rebirths. The economic situation in India is such that the preservation of manuscripts is not the highest priority, although serious efforts are being made. Yet, thousands of manuscripts disappear every year, either through decay or lack of care, or because they are sold to tourists.

It can now be said with satisfaction that "Hindi" *bhakti* literature has gained in interest in Indological centres all over the world. Scholars are more aware than before of the challenging mass of interesting material in this field, and quite a few young scholars have joined the group of researchers specializing in this field.

1.2 Critical editions

It was in the course of research on Nāmdev that the hypothesis about the relation between "manuscripts representing repertoires" was developed and tested. With this hypothesis much *bhakti* literature and its transmission during the oral and the scribal period can now be studied in a different light. Let me explain.

Nāmdev (ca. 1280-1350) was one of the most important *bhakta*-s of Maharashtra and he is considered to be the earliest representative of the *bhakti* movement in North Indian vernaculars. He stands at the origin of the movement in which great *bhakta*-s later on like Kabīr, Dādū, Nānak and others developed as outstanding mystic reformers. Besides the numerous *abhanga*-s in Marathi, there are many *pad*-s in Hindi with the name of Nāmdev and traditionally attributed to the Marathi Nāmdev. These *pad*-s too have been very popular -- as is testified by the abundance of 17th century manuscripts with these *pad*-s -- and are still being sung today.

The study of Nāmdev, in collaboration with Mukund Lath, Jaipur, has been exclusively based on manuscripts. The earliest available source is the Fatehpur manuscript of Jaipur (1582) and the *Ādi Granth* (1604). The other manuscripts consulted are dated 1636, 1653, 1658, 1660, 1664, 1675, 1676, 1681, 1684, 1698. For the *pad*-s of Nāmdev, I started looking for manuscripts and copying them in 1973 and in each of my successive study tours. In these manuscripts we began to uncover a pattern in the

repertoires of travelling singers and I now want briefly to describe the growing insight.

In 1971 I came back from India, after six years of study, and had a clear picture of what my research would consist of: the copying of manuscripts and preparation of critical editions of original texts, and translation. I also saw that my work would necessarily include going to far away places in Rajasthan and to important institutions in the cities. On the basis of the manuscripts found, I would reconstruct, I thought, the archetype of the *pad*-s I wanted to edit. Since scribes committed errors, intentionally or unknowingly, these variant readings should enable researchers to establish the relationship between the manuscripts. On the basis of these relationships the stemma should allow one to reconstruct the "critical" text: a classical, scholarly approach to manuscripts leading to the Archetype!

Indian scholars have applied this method to the *bhakti* literature they found in 17th century manuscripts. E.g. Sukhdev Singh, Benares, editor of the *Bijak*, told me that Kabīr wrote down his own *pad*-s, and if we find a sufficient number of manuscripts we should be able to reconstruct what Kabīr wrote! Pārasnāth Tivārī, took it for granted that we should be able to reconstruct the original text of Kabīr, if we put together all the little pieces that have survived in the manuscripts. I translate from his critical edition a metaphor about the reconstruction of the text of Kabīr, which can be compared to the piling up of bricks from a wall that has collapsed:² it all looked very simple and easy, but wrong, and it became an even more exciting adventure, when we started to discover the singers in the manuscripts. Let me illustrate this growing insight by giving a description of the method of transmission of the songs of the Sants.

Let us imagine we are travelling through Northwest India in 1550 A.D., on sandy tracks or on bumpy roads after the rainy season. We spend the nights on the floor in temples and watch the audiences drawn by travelling singers singing songs of *bhakti*. These singers, like the Puranic bards, received extended hospitality depending on the quality and depth of their performance. They may not have belonged to a particular *sampradāy* and they sang what appealed most to the local feelings. We are on the way to Rajasthan after a visit to Benares, where a few years before Raidās had died, and where the oldest member in the singers' family had heard a person called Kabīr. This family of travelling musicians, a few generations before, may have been to Maharastra where they had heard a poet called Nāmdev. Thus, their repertoire went on expanding and some started to feel the need to write down songs.

The singers sang the songs which were most in demand, such as the

² "Today the original design of the house is changed and distorted, but the bricks which built it are still there. We have to collect them, and after looking at their original cuttings carefully, to replace them in their original position as far as possible. In this way, we can reconstruct the house".

P. Tivari, *Kabīr-granthāvalī*, Allahabad, 1964, Intr., p. 54.

songs of Nāmdev and Kabīr, which they had learned from their fathers. The singers too were artists and inspired by a particular environment they added new, sometimes their own songs, to the repertoire. This should not amaze us. Present day musicologists in Rajasthan studying the Dev Narayan or Pābūjī performance pay their performers by the hour. Some found that the story never ended and, on close analysis, it was found to include gossip about contemporary politicians. Memory was their only way of recording, but as the repertoires grew bigger, some musicians started to keep little (or big) notebooks as an aid to their memory. The earliest manuscripts seem to have had these notebooks as their basis. The manuscripts of the 17th century that have been preserved are copies of these early notes now lost. Scholars of the 20th century have to rely on 17th century manuscripts which are **copies** of the scribbled notes of singers in order to reconstruct and edit what the **singers were singing**. I cannot of course go so far as to say: "to reconstruct what Nāmdev or Kabīr or Raidās were singing".

Indian musicians used to sing clusters of songs according to particular modes, called *rāg*. It appears that first the singer sang a particular *pad* in a particular *rāg*; he grouped together the *pad*-s which were to be sung in the same *rāg*. Consequently, a *rāg* is like an identity card for the earliest period of oral transmission. It was only later, when compilers took over, that *pad*-s were classified according to the main theme.

The same song could be sung to different *rāg*-s and as a result we find songs classified under different *rāg*-s in different manuscripts. This variation in classification is obviously not due to a scribe's intervention, but stems from the oral period itself, when the songs were in the hands of the singers. Subsequently, the songs were transmitted under different *rāg*-s and appeared as such also in the manuscripts. Thus, looking at the *rāg* structure we are able to make a preliminary classification of the musical recensions.

When, for Nāmdev, Kabīr and Raidās, we compare the *rāg* structure in the *Ādi Granth* with that in the Rajasthani repertoires, we find considerable differences. The Panjabi singers handled a text which was not only morphologically but also musically very different from what their colleagues in Rajasthan had. We are tempted to propose that the *pad*-s which have the same *rāg* in the *Ādi Granth* and in the Rajasthani manuscripts are likely to have belonged to a very early common source. In fact, what we find in the 17th century Rajasthani manuscripts is a variant musical version which may well be as old as the musical version from which the Panjabi singers drew their inspiration, if not older. At what muddy or sandy crossroads did singing families go their own separate way, and at what point in the 16th century?

In order to explain the variations in the texts of the songs in the manuscripts, it is useful to have an understanding of the process by which the songs of the Sants were transmitted. Clearly the most direct method for the transmission would have been if the Sant himself, let us

say, Kabīr taught one of his songs to one of his followers in a *guru śiṣya paramparā*. In that *guru*-disciple tradition a song will probably be handed down in a form which does not vary very much from its original. However, even the original core text itself might not have been totally fixed and so disciples learning the song from Kabīr at different times during his life might have been taught different forms of the same core text. However, transmission in *guru*-disciple relationship could not have been the only form of oral transmission. Singers from outside the tradition too may have learnt Kabīr's songs by listening to them being performed by Kabīr or one of his disciples. While people in non-literate societies have a considerable ability to learn and recall texts purely through hearing them, a version of a song learnt through listening to it, even a few times, might nevertheless not have been an exact copy of the original performance text, and the distinction between the core text and the performance text could have become blurred when a song was learnt in this way. It is likely that the songs of e.g. Kabīr would have been learnt at third hand, by singers who heard his songs being performed by other singers who had learnt them by listening to Kabīr, or his disciples. Even those singers who had heard Kabīr first hand might have heard him at different times and perhaps remembered what he was singing differently. Due to this process of learning the songs at third hand during the period of oral transmission there would also probably have been a conflation of core text and performance text. This would suggest that the extant versions **in the manuscripts** probably represent texts created out of an amalgam of what was once commentorial performance text and core text.³

1.3 The language of this *bhakti* literature is a mixed medium, that was borrowed, not only from Sanskrit and Persian but also from the local idioms and dialects; the travelling singers adopted many terms and expressions as they travelled from one region to another. A comparison of the *Ādi Granth* and the Rajasthani versions of the songs of e.g. Nāmdev and Raidās shows that variations were introduced where sections of the text were in linguistic styles unfamiliar to some of the singers. This is particularly evident where the songs were in the Perso-Arabic style or where they incorporated Sanskritic diction. In some instances this lead to obscure meanings of the text, while in others it simply lead to the substitution of similar New Indo-Aryan terms for Perso-Arabic terms. Such changes are indicative of the influence of oral transmission. Such linguistic muddling is a type of change which could be expected if a song had been learnt by listening to it at an assembly of devotees, rather than directly to Kabīr or another *Santa* and their followers. Such changes point to the fact the the performance texts often

³ For examples of commentorial additions to the core text, see W. M. Callewaert & P. Friedlander, *The life and works of Raidās*, Delhi, Manohar Book Publications, pp. 69ff.

became altered during transmission because of the limitations in the abilities of the performers. If all these factors are taken together it is no wonder that the versions of the songs found vary to the extent they do. In fact, it is remarkable that they are as consistent as they are.

This language was not until now described in exhaustive grammars and detailed dictionaries, as was the case with Sanskrit. Consequently, each fresh edition in this field requires a new grammar and fresh glossaries and a student of this literature has to be acquainted with different linguistic areas in order to produce a translation. Here again new tools have to be made. Often a parallel passage can be useful to compare forms not found in any dictionary.⁴ These publications may be useful both for philologists engaged in translation of parallel texts, and for linguists studying the language of the 16th and 17th centuries in northwest India. At the same time the abundance of material made available here can help in studying the language and its development.

2. Translating *Santa* literature

In the light of the description of the *Santa* literature given above it is evident how essential it is a) to look for the oldest manuscripts available and prepare critical editions, b) to interpret the *Santa* songs as mainly products of an oral tradition, c) to translate these songs with full awareness of the religious, linguistic and poetic interaction in which they originated. I intend to briefly illustrate these conditions with examples from my own research and translation work.

2.1 Oldest manuscripts

When Jan Gopāl sat down to write the *Life story of Dādū Dayāl*, around 1620 he could not have imagined that his text would ever be edited "critically" 366 years later. The very idea of a critical edition probably never occurred to him: scribes were not supposed to make mistakes while copying; they certainly did not intentionally alter the text or add anything.

His Life story as it is now found in the manuscripts is a gold-mine of sectarian interpolations and variants, illustrating the growing biases in the early group of Dādū's followers. Very soon -- one of the manuscripts with the enlarged text is dated 1654 A.D. -- in the history of the Dādūpanth, efforts were made to "explain" Dādū's association with the low caste of *dhuniyā*-s and with Muslims, or to emphasize his celibacy. I copied many old manuscripts of this text and found basically two versions, here abbreviated as E (early) and L (later).

^{ā4} In view of such a comparison I have published *Nirguṇ-bhakti sāgar. Devotional Hindī literature*, (2 Vols.), Heidelberg, Süd-Asien Institut, 1991; Manohar Book Publications, Delhi, (with B. Op de Beeck); and *The Sarvāṅgī of Gopāl Dās*, (2 Vols.), Delhi, Manohar Book Publications, 1993. A computer-produced *Index to the Srī Gurū Granth Sāhib* (4 vols.) appeared with Motilal Banarsidass in 1995.

When we compare the text of 'E' with the text in 'L', we notice that the original text has been tampered with, especially with regard to the delicate questions of Dādū's non-Brahmanic origin and his occupation as a cotton-carder. The earliest version clearly and merely states that Dādū was born in Ahmedabad and that he was working as a cotton-carder (*dhuniyā*). Thus in verse 1.6 of 'E' we read:

"There was great joy in the house of the *dhuniyā* (at his birth)."

In 'L', however, we read instead: "All were overjoyed."

Then follows an interpolation in 'L' telling the story of the Brahman merchant in Ahmedabad who found a baby in a river. In v. 1.16 we read in 'E': "He carded cotton", for which 'L' gives: "He entered the state of *sahaj*".

In chapter 2 the encounter with the Qāzi from Ajmer provokes a discussion which may imply Dādū's affiliation with the Muslims. In v. 11 of 'E' we read: "A Muslim lives by the Divine Word". If this is a definition of the behaviour expected from (the Muslim?) Dādū, it is neatly avoided in 'L': "without the Divine Word, one cannot go to heaven".

Yet another example of variant readings is in the context of a burglary in Dādū's house. In verses 3.9-10 of 'E' we read:

"When the thief found threads (of cotton)... the family awoke";
(Dādū's) mother and wife said...

In 'L' we find instead:

"When the thief found books, the saints awoke;...the saints and disciples said",...

Verse 4.5b in 'E' ("he went on carding cotton") is missing in 'L'.

We find hardly any variant in the next chapters, still surprisingly the issue of cotton-carding is raised in the presence of emperor Akbar. For "working hard day and night, there are plenty of cotton-carders in Sikrī" (in 'E'), we read in 'L': "Roaming around in a holy dress, there are many beggars in Sikrī" (7.12). The terms used in the interpolations of 'L' to denote Dādū's birth clearly suggest that he was of divine origin: "He transformed His body and appeared in the form of a child", 'He descended (*avatār lenā*)'.

In verse 1.7 of 'E' we read: "When he was eleven years old, Bābā Būdhā appeared to him", whereas in 'L' we read: "Hari appeared to him in the form of an old man".

The term *būdhā* may be used in its literal, non-specific meaning of 'an old man', it may be an actual name (Būḍhan?), or it may designate a particular person bearing the name as a title of respect. There is no certainty about the identity of this person, but there is definitely a difference between the reading *bābā būdhā* (in the earliest version) and the literal meaning of *būḍhai rūp* (as in the text of 'L'). This difference is emphasised by the fact that Dādū's second-generation disciple Sundar Dās, when tracing the origin of the Dādūpanth back to Brahmā, calls Dādū's preceptor Vriddhānanda! For more examples, I refer to the critical edition, *The Hindī biography of Dādū Dayāl*.

To sum up. Sectarian scribes did change the nuances in particular

texts, on purpose, and it is essential that a translator first establishes the critical text. The translation will thus not only bring out what is most probably the most authentic version of a text; it will also highlight the changing attitudes of scribes in the early period of scribal transmission. A similar phenomenon, but not as dramatic, is found in the orally transmitted repertoires of the *Santa* songs. There too it is very important that the oldest available manuscripts are compared.

2.2 Oral tradition

It has been the ambition of modern scholarship to sift the "authentic" songs by the major Sants from a large corpus of manuscripts. The time-honoured method to achieve this has been to trace the ancestry of a corpus in the manuscripts and to construct a stemma. This method creates many frustrating problems in the case of the songs of the Sants, because there was a considerable period of oral transmission before the earliest manuscripts were written down. It is essential that we look for traces of the singing tradition surviving in the written corpus we have before us. Such traces can be spotted. They give us clues that can help in discovering a pattern, where the traditional method of stemmatic text-editing can see nothing but chaos.

In the case of the songs of e. g. Nāmdev, Kabīr or Raidās, we only know the modified forms. The true form, the form uttered by the poet, remains unknown. Yet we can define certain forms as modified, because they differ from what the similarity in many manuscripts suggests and they are introduced by singers, not scribes.

Several kinds of singers' modifications can be spotted: inversion of stanzas and addition of short phrases or syllables, fillers, a different approach to the refrain, etc.

It became a growing insight when editing Nāmdev and Raidās that each single song is a musical and textual unit; this unit is the basis for textual considerations. "Language" only cannot be a satisfactory basis, as in traditional text-editions, especially not if one "defines" the language of e.g. Kabīr's songs in the corpus as a whole. Many, or all of his songs went their own way through Northern India. Even if the songs are found in collections, these collections can often not form a satisfactory basis for drawing "textual" conclusions. Further, the order in which the songs are classified differs immensely in the records now at hand. The only factor that binds the songs together is the classification under a particular *rāg* (see above).

One of the most common variants brought about by singers is the (dis)order of the stanzas.⁵ Each stanza in a *Santa* song could have a life of its own (as did each song!). Within a song a stanza could be moved

⁵ For examples I refer to W. Callewaert and M. Lath, *The Hindī songs of Nāmdev*, Leuven, 1989 (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 29), pp. 64ff.; and also W. Callewaert and P. Friedlander, *The life and works of Raidās*, Delhi, Manohar Book Publications, 1992, pp. 59ff (see fn. 2).

about, dropped or added as an independent unit. Was the stanza the smallest unit that could be moved about? Or, what is it in the musical structure that makes the movements of these textual units possible? For this the text-critic and translator have to consider the *tāl* or rhythmic cycles in a song, and the *āvarta* or single *tāl* cycle, which is the smallest unit of the *tāl*. Fortunately, in Rajasthani manuscripts -- unlike the manuscripts with Abhangas of Nāmdev which I studied in Maharashtra -- the *rāg* is given with each *Santa* song; the *tāl* is not, or only very rarely. In Callewaert, *The Hindī songs of Nāmdev* (1989), pp. 68ff., we argue that we are able to discover the *āvarta* in the text of a song, even without having access to the singing tradition in which it was sung. Thus one can study the basic framework of a song and draw the necessary "critical" conclusions for a translation.⁶

2.3 Religious, linguistic and poetic interaction

The result of the singers' listening and composing, travelling and camping in different regions was not only that the songs changed their form: the language too was adjusted to the capacity of the audiences. Words were changed because they were understood better, or appealed more. In the temple or monastery of a particular sect, or in a village where certain sectarian traditions were predominant, the singers may have adapted even the imagery in a particular song. Above all, both the composing *bhakta*-s and the travelling singers borrowed from previous or contemporary poets. In this stemmatic chaos the translator, I would suggest, has to choose the meaning which makes most sense, even if thus there are several meanings. The translator may have to be satisfied with the fact that (s)he is not even certain that the choosen meaning is really what the original *Santa* meant.

A result of the stemmatic chaos is also that certain words are morphologically so corrupt that only a comparison with parallel strings of words -- often formulaic expressions were borrowed as a whole -- can help to find the meaning. Here again the databanks of *bhakti* literature are useful.

⁶ For the "fillers", see W. M. Callewaert & M. Lath, *op. cit.*, pp. 70ff., and the refrain, pp. 75ff. (see fn. 4)

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One Birth from the Encounter Between Text and Translator, and the Non-Other: the Translation of the *Spandasam̐doha* of Kṣemarāja

by
Enrica Garzilli

1. The text ¹

"Let us praise Śiva, the source of the majestic unfolding of the wheel of powers, in whose opening and closing eyelashes the world is generated and disappears".

This is the first verse of the *Spandakārikā* on which the teacher Kṣemarāja wrote his primary philosophical commentary, the *Spandasam̐doha*. He was the cousin and pupil of Abhinavagupta and lived approximately in the period between 975 and 1125 in Kaśmīr. The *Spandakārikā*, in its turn, is a commentary on the *Śivasūtra*, a short holy book revealed by the god Śiva to the sage Vasugupta. Therefore, the *Spandasam̐doha*, literally the 'Totality of *Spanda*', is a twenty-five page commentary on the first verse of a commentary on many short and cryptic medieval *sūtra*-s. Kṣemarāja explains that he writes a work only on this first verse because in reality it contains in itself the meaning of the whole *Spandakārikā*.²

The text is published in the Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies. I edited it, using the modern manuscript of 1875-1876, and translating it into Italian as my doctoral dissertation (Rome, March 1985). It was published in Naples in 1989 by the Istituto Universitario Orientale, the oldest oriental institute in the world, established by the Vatican at the beginning of the XVIII century.³ This is important to know because the

¹ In this paper I preserved the character of the original talk given at the symposium "Translating, Translations, Translators: From India to the West" (May 13, 1994, Harvard University).

² The whole *Spandasam̐doha* consists of the twelve different interpretations that Kṣemarāja gives the compound *śakticakravibhavaprabhava*.

³ E. Garzilli, *Lo Spandasam̐doha di Kṣemarāja. Traduzione dal testo originale sanscrito del XII sec. d.C.*, IUO, *Supplemento* n. 59 agli ANNALI - vol. 49 (1989), fasc. 2, Napoli 1989.

In 1988, more than three years after my graduation, while I was in Delhi, I sent the last proofs of the above publication to M. Dyczkowski who returned them to me in Spring 1989. He extensively used them for his book *Stanzas on Vibration* (Albany 1992). He acknowledges my work with these words: "I should also mention another student of Professor Gnoli, Enrica Garzilli, who was good enough to send me a copy of her Italian translation of Kṣemarāja's *Spandasam̐doha*." (*Ibid.*, Acknowledgments, pp. IX-X). He even translated according to my corrections of the text, without mentioning them. See for

targeted reader is different from that of a publishing house like Penguin Books.

2. The problems and their solutions

The first problem in addressing this philosophical text was to know as much as possible of the Spanda school and the system to which the school belongs, the Trika of Kaśmīr.⁴ This is of course an *a priori* practice that is applicable to all texts, but in this case the process was not so easy because of two problems, one "external" and one "internal".

2.1 The external problem of studying the philosophical and religious system of the Trika was that, according to the traditional teaching in Rome (started by the wonderful scholar Giuseppe Tucci who was still alive when I was studying), the professor should only expose concepts. The student should adapt his/her level of comprehension and knowledge to that of his/her professor, and never vice versa. For this reason it was useless to ask questions during and after class with some of the professors.

Moreover, according to an old but persistent fashion in some Academic environments, students, and above all women were discouraged from undertaking the way of Sanskrit.

2.2 The internal problem was the lack of translations, also due to the general scholarly opinion that, this system, which has its root also in Tantrism, would have proposed something obscene or scandalous (something which in fact is sometimes true).

The Trika texts, in particular those of Kṣemarāja, are generally edited and published in the Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies. As most Indologists know, this means that the editors, pandits or scholars in possession of manuscripts, corrected and reconstructed the texts by sometimes changing some phonemes for others with similar sounds in their native Kashmiri language, or by adding and/or deleting lines, and by adding their own commentary at the bottom of the page. Just to give an example, in the *Spandasāṃdoha* itself (p. 20, line 12) I corrected *śuddhavidyā*, 'pure knowledge', to *aśuddhavidyā*, 'impure knowledge': the philosophical implication is obvious, the first meaning the process of recognizing oneself as identical to Śiva, the second meaning the

example my correction of *śuddhavidyā* of the edited text into *aśuddhavidyā* (*Lo Spandasāṃdoha...*, cit., p. 31, fn. 82) and his translation (*Stanzas...*, cit., p. 69) as "impure knowledge (*vidyā*)". There is also no mention of my publication in his Bibliography. For a parallel instance, compare what André Padoux writes in his *Vāc*, Albany 1990, p. 57, fn. 63.

⁴ See E. Garzilli, "The Unique Position of the Spanda School among the Others of the Trika System of Kaśmīr", in the electronic *International Journal of Tantric Studies*, <http://www.shore.net/~india/ijts/>, Vol. 1, No. 1 (August 1995), pp. 1-16.

identification of the imprisoned soul, the *jīva*, with its psycho-physical whole: that is the material constituent elements, plus its mind, its intelligence, its sense of I. The *jīva* lives as different and separated from the universe, and from the immanent and transcendent ontological principle, that is lord Śiva.

2.3 We do not have many manuscripts available of the books of the Trika schools probably because they belong to families who, of course, protect them jealously. For the *Spandasam̐doha*, I used only one modern manuscript of 1875-1876.

In cases of words which were totally incomprehensible and incongruous, should I have changed them or not? My answer at the time was yes. I have also amended the text according to the criteria of *iudicium et selectio*, to use the words of the Italian philologist Giorgio Pasquali. In short, this method is that called an "open review".

2.4 In addition to the lack of manuscripts and of editions, there was also a lack of translations. Only now do we have a few translations of the many books of the Trika schools, and often multiple translations of the same text: for instance, the Ānandavardhana's *Dhvanyāloka* has been translated at least eight times (with or without Abhinavagupta's commentary) into several languages, as far as I know.⁵ Of course many of these translations, due to the excellent abilities of the translators, often offer a new reading of the text. However, it would be better to translate the huge amount of untranslated Trika texts we still have, or search for the texts that we still know only by quotation, or to edit the few manuscripts available to us. It would always be better, I think, to offer the audience, whatever it might be, a larger range of texts of the same school.

2.5 Therefore, the problem in translating the *Spandasam̐doha* is the history of its philosophy, considered both diachronically and synchronically, external and internal, its relation to books of other philosophical and religious systems and to those of the system to which it belongs. The external historical problem is related to other books of other authors of the same system and different schools, and of Kṣemarāja; and internally, it is closely connected with the text and its authenticity, its language and its intelligibility.

The language of the *Spandasam̐doha*, and Trika texts in general, is very difficult because the linguistic reference system is very complex in that the addressee is the adept, the initiated.

⁵ See e.g. some of the *Dhvanyāloka*'s translations (given in chronological order): H. Jacoby (ZDMG Vols. LVI and LVIII, 1902-1903); R. S. Tripathi (New Delhi 1963); I. M. Alichanova (Moskva 1974); K. Krishnamoorthy (Dharwar 1974); V. Mazarino (Torino 1983); D. H. H. Ingalls, J. M. Masson & M. V. Patwardhan (Cambridge 1990).

2.6 According to philologists there is higher criticism and lower criticism. Lower criticism establishes the text on the basis of the best possible evidence and explains it. Higher criticism then may address itself to further questions of interpretation and of the influences that have worked upon the text. There is a distinction between the two, but there is also a continuity.

Lower criticism is the explanation of the technical terms and the explanation of the primary meaning of the text, according to the philosophic and religious context and the devices of the author. The usual temptation is to explain everything according to higher criticism, as if the lower criticism were an epiphenomenon, a secondary "symptom", of the higher. Another temptation is to explain everything in colloquial terms, according to a contemporary fashion used in many universities in America. The reality of a text is not an island in the ocean of the unmanifest and the unexpressed.⁶ The higher criticism cannot precede the lower, but a religious and philosophical text cannot be translated with the simplicity or banality or the conventionality of everyday language. **There is a temporal status of words which constitutes the historicity of the text.**

As far as the internal problems of the text are concerned, I tried to use lower textual criticism to resolve them.

2.7 There is a well-known belief that philologists are tempted to write a translation similar to an anatomic preparation, or, according to Paul Valéry, to put into prose what is to be put into a coffin.

Traditionally only two kinds of translations are considered correct: the "university translation" and the "literary translation". The first one is a translation meant to be a pedagogic medium; it is an interlinear, literal translation. The literary translation is a translation meant to be the aim in itself, a separate aesthetic work. This is of course especially valid for poetry.⁷

This was the theme of Benedetto Croce.⁸ He wrote in *La poesia*, that the university translation of poetry is only an instrument to make the original understandable.

Conversely, the literary translation should translate not only the

⁶ To paraphrase J. A. B. van Buitenen words in his Introduction to the translation of the *Mahābhārata*.

⁷ This is especially valid for Sanskrit hymns, where one should address the problem of translating philosophical/religious terms, and poetry. See e.g. E. Garzilli, *The Bhāvopahāra of Cakrapāṇinātha. A Sanskrit Hymn to Śiva (11th-12th Century A.D.)*, IUO, Supplemento n. 74 agli ANNALI - vol. 53 (1993), fasc. 1, Napoli 1993; see also my forthcoming article *A New Reading of the Bhāvopahāra of Cakrapāṇinātha*.

⁸ Benedetto Croce, *La poesia: introduzione alla critica e storia della poesia e della letteratura*, Bari, G. Laterza & figli, 1936.

words and the grammar and the meaning but also the **phonetics**. Above all, it should translate the poetry of the original.

Abel Chevalley in 1927 wrote in *Cahiers du Sud: "Enquête sur la traduction"*, that one should provoke in the foreign reader the same impression the original provoked in the indigenous and contemporary reader. One should translate according to the text, the period, and the probable readers for whom the original was written and, of course, according to the author.

In this sense the translation is an artist's creation like the creation of an actor when he or she interprets or re-interprets a part, or the music played by a concert artist. There is a **historical process** involved in translating. One can say that any **translation is an interpretation that produces transformation**.

Therefore, traditionally and theoretically there has always been a gap among the professor-translator and the writer and the philosopher-translator.

There has also been a gap among the indicative translation, the interlinear translation and, especially in the case of poetry, the literary translation.

2.8 One more problem that I faced is that many words cannot be translated. In any other language they would sound too bizarre. Many of them are also purely technical terms that cannot exist beyond their philosophical situation.

I translated many terms, writing the Sanskrit in parenthesis in order to leave the sound and above all to indicate the different ways one can translate the same word.

From a study of *Tristes tropiques* it is evident that Lévi-Strauss used more than three hundred Latin, English, Portuguese and Nambikwara words.⁹ About two-thirds are translated. One should infer the remainder from context: many of them are words well-known in France.

Frankly, when I read this book I did not understand many of its words because they were in English and I did not know much of it. Translating the *Spandasam̐doha* I wanted to avoid this. In my memory, *Tristes tropiques* is a wonderful book with clouds on its pages: those are the sentences with untranslated words.

2.9 The basic problem of the *Spandasam̐doha* is that the language used is not convergent: it is not conceived to communicate with ordinary people. Its language is divergent, namely it belongs to a limited number of people who speak to each other and who refer to a uniform cultural system. These kinds of books were composed by medieval teachers for a few pupils. They are products of an oral or written tradition, and often are re-arrangements of previous books or different traditions of the same

⁹ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes tropiques*, Paris, Plon, 1955.

book or oral transmission.

Kṣemarāja himself says on the third page that since the reality of *spanda* was disclosed by great teachers, he has a certain interest in its extension, in Sanskrit 'ābhoga'. *Ābhoga* has two primary meanings: 'full comprehension', and 'extension'. The sentence can be understood as that he had a certain interest in the "full comprehension of this reality" or in the "extension of this reality". 'Extension' is traditionally explained by Spanda teachers, and in the explicative note at the bottom of the text, as, "what makes shine the wonder of this [reality]". 'Wonder', *camatkāra* in Sanskrit, is in its turn a technical term used in this system to define both the aesthetic feeling, and the religious feeling. It is the wonder or amazement of one who contemplates his/her own nature in its essential reality; that is *spanda*. In its turn, as we will see, *spanda* is a technical term and the main concept of the homonymous school, etc. Therefore, the translation of a single word involves a series of morphological and semantic choices, besides the choice of a word in its historical use and context.

In reality, the main concepts of these three levels, the religious, the philosophical, and the aesthetic overlap. This means that Kṣemarāja, in this text, uses the same technical terms. Therefore, we should add this internal problem to the others mentioned above: that we should be familiar with the religious and aesthetic books of the Trika system with its many schools and sub-schools. Their main features sometimes have long historical roots, and sometimes also belong to other systems, and to other non-Hindu traditions. This implies a certain knowledge of other fields of study.

2.10 From what I have said of this text, it is clear that there were a lot of problems in understanding it, and often I asked myself whether it was possible to translate it without knowing *a priori* its content and its meaning. That, in case of a first translation as this one, is of course impossible. The only thing to do was to try to localize the many technical words which constitute a real language for an initiate into this tradition, and to try to understand from these flashes the first rough meaning of the text. It is an **intuitive** act on the part of the translator.

I also should add that the language into which I translated the work, Italian, is in itself much more ambiguous and intricate than English with a different standard of elegance, both in terminology and syntax. This is an obvious advantage when one wants to translate Spanda or Trika terms, and Sanskrit in general. Therefore, what was cryptic, involved and indefinite in the *Spandasamdoha*, was retained in the Italian translation: whereas I think the fascination and the difficulty of this text would be lost in English.

2.11 The author himself seemingly used to explain the words, in reality to support his thesis, by means of traditional etymology, *nirukta*. This is the traditional explanation of words according to which, for instance,

the word Bhairava can be explained with seven different etymologies referring to a part of the phoneme, each of them meaning a particular quality of the God. *Nirukta* sheds light on the philosophy of history and the history of philosophy of a text, but it does not help an inexperienced translator.

3. I and the text

All those problems are linked to the particular problem of the translator: myself with my personal knowledge, my understanding, my history, my style. A text is a historically determined product: but also **I am historically determined as the translator**. My super-structure cannot be settled like the mind of a medieval Indian adept, nor can my structure be. I do not even pretend to be similar in intention to those teachers and pupils. Therefore, the relationship between the text, myself, and the audience, is different. In the intermediate space among these three elements **I have to build a way to communicate**. I have to go out from home, my own language, carrying myself with all my personal history and philosophy, and meet the author of the text, with his own philosophy and history and life in another time and place. I have to reify him and try to make his own language, history and philosophy understandable to a reader who most probably does not know anything at all of it. This is the historical process of a translation. History -- or, better, historiography -- is based on imagination, on moral instances, and on ethics: we see what we can, and what we want to see. Historiography is our reconstruction and use of data, and our use of their absence. We can make silence speak. This is a translation.

3.1 The fact remains that it is much easier to read these Trika concepts and references in Sanskrit than in any other language.¹⁰

I performed, as any philologist, **a global cultural operation on texts**. When you translate and analyze a text you need many tools; it means, ideally, not only grammar and lexicography, but prosody, methodology, history, geography, philosophy, anthropology, law, economics, etc. You need the tools of that linguistic context.

Together with Giambattista Vico in *Principj di una scienza nuova...*, I should say that philology and philosophy are tools to build up a historical pattern.¹¹ He considered philology as an empirical study of

¹⁰ Just to give an example, I was explaining one aspect of the powers of Śiva in its aspect of Khecarī to students. Khecarī lit. means 'She-who-wanders-in-the-ether'. One student, who knows Sanskrit well, said: "Yes, Khecarī is the witch". In fact, 'witch' is a secondary meaning of the term, but it has nothing to do with the idea of powers of Śiva operating at the level of the soul. It simply fitted the books this student was used to read, so that he "thought" of Khecarī as a witch. The context forces a translator to choose the meaning.

¹¹ Giambattista Vico, *Principj di una scienza nuova intorno alla natura delle nazioni*, Napoli 1725.

languages, history and literature of a people.

The final aim can be to actualize the text and to find connections with our contemporary history (political, economic, intellectual, etc.), and to use an alien text as a means to comprehend our own situation. Of course, a text can also be read only in the light of its spirit and/or spirituality, its poetics, etc. But even then, a text is not a phenomenon isolated from the context of its author, and the author is not isolated from his/her historical situation.

3.2 The main problem I had was to understand the *Spandasam̐doha* beyond and through the words. In fact, the text resorts to an Other, that is in reality a **Non-Other**.

It refers and alludes to the Other, where this Other does not mean only the main philosophical systems present in Kaśmīr (Veda, Vedānta, Buddhism, Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Pāñcarātra, Siddha movement, etc.) which influenced the Spanda school and the others of the Trika system, but also the various sub-schools, and texts that we know only through short quotations.

For instance, Kṣemarāja in the *Spandasam̐doha* says: "And this is demonstrated by the verses which start with 'Who is deeply' and end with 'he is not obfuscated'." Of course, the sentence does not appear to be very logical, by means of our Aristotelian logic, nor by means of the basic concepts of psychology or our simple common sense. In reality, the author presupposes that the reader, that means the adept, knows the entire sentence. In this case, it is easy to guess because it is one *kārikā* of the *Spandakārikā*, on which the author wrote the *Spandasam̐doha*; in many other cases is not easy at all to attribute because the same sentence is reported under many titles, often synonymous, or quoted as said by a certain name very popular among these schools, or simply quoted without any reference. Often, the text from which it was extrapolated is lost.

3.3 However, even when we have the lucky combination of a well known text with a good translation, the meaning is often too obscure.

In fact, the Other to whom I was alluding was the personal experience of *spanda* itself, that is to say the living experience of subject, as subject of investigation, and not as object. To use the terminology of geophilosophy, *spanda* is not a concept, it is a territory. The "Other", in this case, is *spanda* (or it could be the word of God in other cases), which is the vital vibration of our consciousness; *spanda* is also, among other concepts, the grasping of the self-consciousness of a subject in terms of Speech or *Logos*. It is a dynamic process. The revealing oneself to oneself, and to express oneself through language is *spanda*. *Spanda* is also, according to Kṣemarāja, the normal order of the letters of the *devanāgarī* alphabet, called *māṭṛkā*, and the special, apparently meaningless, order of the letters in the register called *mālīnī*. This Other is an experience that cannot be thought of as thought, nor as the thinkable, but can only be

thinking itself. It is, in reality, a **Non-Other**.

Self-consciousness is explained as the speaking world, the thinking world, never spoken and never thought, never split from the subject who is the enjoyer and never enjoyable nor enjoyed. As Kṣemarāja explains, the "I" is the supreme vocality without any relation with the object, that is without any relation with the words of the world, the historical, meaningful, living, conventional words.

This notion brings to mind the words of Franz von dem Kneesebeck who said:

Words deprived of the strength, you are fragments detached
And you poor rows of shadow, by yourselves come back.¹²

This concept of *spanda* or Non-Other as language, is the opposite to the Other; it is the pure non-alterity, that as such cannot be defined. This kind of relationship which the subject experiences with himself is the exact opposite of the well-known model in psychoanalytic pathology where the verbal hallucination in its purest pattern is the relationship of the subject with his own words, sensed as "Other".¹³

4. The universal language?

To explain *spanda* using Walter Benjamin's words in his *Über die Sprache überhaupt und über die Sprache des Menschen*, we can say *spanda* is the vibrating consciousness that is the essence of God, and God is Language.¹⁴ How is this language divine? The Language of God is creative. Benjamin explains that it is creative in the verb and knowing in the name; and verb and name pass one into the other without any solution of continuity. Kṣemarāja recognizes that this experience of *spanda* he defines in his small work with the usual human terms of time, space, form, and name, it is in reality the supreme energy of the Lord in terms of Voice (Vāc), inherent to Him as the quality of warmth is inherent to fire; and it is undefinable and subtle. It is in fact called the Supreme Vocality which is without any relationship with the object, and can be compared with the cry of an animal or with poetical language or, in this case, with this mystical experience. It does not resort to conventional language that is corporeal (Vaikharī). Just as poetical language has a particular indefinable quality called *dhvani*, this

¹² "Ihr Kraft beraubte Wort', ihr seid zerstücke Stück Und seichte schattenscreif, allein, entweicht zurück."

¹³ See J. Lacan, "D'une question préliminaire à tout traitement possible de la psychose", in *Ecrits*, Paris 1966; *Idem*, *Le séminaire de Jacques Lacan. Livre III. Les Psychoses*, Paris 1981.

¹⁴ W. Benjamin, *Über die Sprache überhaupt und über die Sprache des Menschen*, 1916. Cf. also W. Benjamin, "Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers", in *Schriften*, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1923.

experience has in itself a particular status called amazement, wonder, that I tried to define above (*vismaya, camatkāra*).

Could be that the ideal solution to all our problems of translating is to use an universal language, or to decodify all natural languages into an universal one?¹⁵ I do not think so. Paraphrasing Gérard Genette, the idea, already present in Romantic authors, of a linguistic confusion (explicit in the representation of the Babel Tower) is a *felix culpa*.¹⁶ I think that natural languages are perfect just because of the plurality of them, because of the plurality of truths they express. The fallacy is to consider truth as definitive and unique. The fallacy is to believe that the best of all languages and its cultural context is one with no contradictions and with no needs, and immune to linguistic change.¹⁷

5. My translation

The result for the translator is a feeling of being out of his/her element.

I do not want the reader to forget that he/she is a foreigner. In the *Spandasam̐doha* we are in a different world, another world. I don't think it is correct to reduce everything to our culture and our schemes, our parameters. **Even though, we have a duty to express as clearly as possible into another language the original world of the text.**

I translated the *Spandasam̐doha* maintaining all the diversity or divergence of its pages, but I tried to use a language as precise and clear as possible using lower literary criticism.

Moreover, to say in Spanda (and generally Trika) terms, I tried to reconstitute the energy of Sanskrit words into Italian words, to give the word the power that it originally has, and not to reduce it into a plain, conventional, historically determined chain of well arranged sentences: to select Italian words with the same pregnant meaning as the correspondent Sanskrit technical words in this 11th-12th century Kashmiri text. That meant also to reproduce assonance and euphony, whenever it was possible.

I delivered this translation just like a mother, meeting the text, and

¹⁵ The utopia of a perfect or universal language is very old and widespread. It dates back to Greeks, and to the diffusion after Alexander the Great of a common language, the *koinè*. The opposite of the idea of an universal language is that of a partial and imperfect one. This is clear in the *Book the Genesis*, where God, in order to punish mankind's arrogance to have built the Babel Tower, confused their language, and created the many languages of the world.

As demonstrated by Arno Borst, many theologies and mythologies have a tale that explains the plurality of languages (A. Borst, *Der Turmbau von Babel. Geschichte der Meinungen über den Ursprung und Vielfalt der Sprachen und Völker*, 6 Vols., Stuttgart, Hiersemann, 1957-1963).

¹⁶ G. Genette, *Mimologiques. Voyage en Cratyle*, Paris, Seuil, 1976.

¹⁷ As some Sanskrit scholar says Sanskrit is fixed and immutated for ever.

originating through it a new historically determined product: that is a translation. Nowadays I would produce a different one.

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Translating Problematic Balinese *Stuti*-s

by
Teun Goudriaan

1. On the island of Bali, which is now a part of the Republic of Indonesia, religious life is still inspired to a high degree by a special blend of Hinduism. The Brahman specialists of this tradition for centuries have made use of the Sanskrit language (or fragments of it, alternating with passages in Old Javanese or other vernaculars) for the formulation of speculative truths as well as for the composition of a number of religious hymns or statements in metrical forms.¹

On the following pages, I restrict myself to the religious hymns that are alternatively termed *Stuti* or *Stava* (incidentally, they obtain other designation). The greater part of this corpus was edited and translated in 1971 by the late Christiaan Hooykaas and myself under the title *Stuti and Stava (Bauddha, Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava) of Balinese Brahman Priests*.²

This book will hereafter be referred to as *Stuti and Stava*.³

During and after his prolonged stays in Bali, Hooykaas did all the work of collecting, ordering, collating, and describing the extremely scattered material. The preparation of critical texts and translations was my part of the job but there was constant deliberation between us on all aspects of the future book. To my knowledge, no substantial review of this publication has since appeared, let alone a well-founded criticism of the translations contained in it. The method of translation contained in *Stuti and Stava* was not systematically discussed in its Introduction. Nevertheless, I am still convinced of its general soundness, not withstanding the obvious fact that several details would benefit from a revision. This is due partly to the use of unidiomatic English expressions and partly to occasional lack of consistency. We decided to translate in principle the whole edited collection: a real challenge because of the quality or kind of Sanskrit found in many of these hymns.

¹ For a good introduction into the traditional culture of Bali, I can still refer to J. L. Swellengrebel and W. F. Wertheim, *Bali, Studies in Life, Thought and Ritual*, Intr. by J. L. Swellengrebel, The Hague-Bandung, W. van Hoeve, 1960, pp. 3-76. A study of a *śaiva* speculative text was published by H. Soebadio, *Jñānasiddhānta. Secret Lore of the Balinese Śaiva Priest. Introduction, Text and Translation*, (Thesis), Leiden 1971.

² T. Goudriaan and C. Hooykaas, *Stuti and Stava (Bauddha, Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava) of Balinese Brahman Priests*, Amsterdam, North Holland Publishing Company, 1971.

³ On the life and work of C. Hooykaas, see J. L. Swellengrebel, "In Memoriam C. Hooykaas", in *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, Vol. 136, pp. 191-214 (including a Bibliography by Hedy I. R. Hinzler), The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1980.

2. In practice, the absurdities encountered in parts of the collected material were so numerous that in many cases translation was becoming a hazardous affair. In order to bring some kind of structure into this intractable mass, we tried to trace a line of division between a group of hymns in "reasonable" or "understandable" language and a group that did not meet such standards mainly because of the total lack of grammatical coherence displayed in it. To the latter group the term "Archipelago Sanskrit" was applied in *Stuti and Stava*.⁴ We labelled the language of a hymn as "Archipelago Sanskrit" when it contained a cumulation of irregular features that stood in the way of a reliable translation. In fact, such hymns were rendered into English in *Stuti and Stava* but the readers were put on their guard by the heading 'Attempt at translation' above the English version. The translations directly follow the Sanskrit texts throughout the book.

On pp. 11f. of the Introduction to *Stuti and Stava*, a set of twelve characteristic features were formulated for the kind of Sanskrit styled "Archipelago" or rather (as I would now prefer) "Indonesianized". Some of these features are as follows:

There is no grammatical construction extending over more than one *śloka* quarter (the relevant hymns are practically always composed in the *śloka* metre). In fact, we can hardly discern any construction at all.

The bulk of these hymns consists of strings of epithets in juxtaposition, mostly of the type called *bahuvrīhi*.

Conjugated verbal forms are very rare.

Many Sanskrit words occur in irregular, abbreviated, extended, or otherwise "Indonesianized" shape, e.g. *bhvana* for *bhuvana*, *nugrāna* for *anugraha*, *ma-śarīra* meaning 'embodied'.

In 1971, we did not specify the number of such "Indonesianized" hymns. Perusing the book, one counts 134 of them, with a total of 728 stanzas. This is somewhat more than one third of the total corpus edited in *Stuti and Stava* (I note in passing that several isolated stanzas, mostly of a ritual nature, were left out of the edited collection). Within the "Indonesianized" group, we can distinguish subtle differences of style, diction, and quality but these details will not concern us now.

It should be emphasized that this is a linguistic analysis that does not pronounce a judgment on the country or region of provenance of these productions. Indeed the "Indonesianised" Sanskrit very probably points to a composition in Java or Bali, but it may contain remote echoes of Indian originals; while the majority of "better", more "understandable", or even "correct" hymns may very well be the work of Javanese or Balinese authors (as well as, for that matter, of first-generation immigrants from South Asia). Of course, the latter statement holds good only as long as a direct original has not been traced in Indian Sanskrit literature. In *Stuti and Stava*, the discovery of such an original could happily be reported in thirty-four cases.

⁴ The term has been coined by a Dutch scholar, R. Goris.

As to the contents of the Balinese hymnal corpus: for the greater part, it reflects the mainly *Śivaite* orientation of Balinese Hinduism. Most deities are invoked as functionaries within a more or less ordered *Śaiva* pantheon. Tantric influence is limited; for instance, although the presence of Śakti as Kuṇḍalinī in the human psycho-physical system is known in Bali, the hymns do not reflect this knowledge, while there is absolutely no reference to the "five M's" or other such rites so often associated with Tantrism. Viṣṇu occupies a secondary position as a warlike god of the *kṣatriya*-s; Kṛṣṇa is absent; a single hymn to Rāma (no. 229)⁵ may have been imported more recently. Scattered throughout the hymnal corpus, a few fragments of enumerative or speculative nature have been included. Most interesting are a number of Buddhist hymns and prose litanies (*dhāraṇī*) recited by Buddhist priests. The ritual cadre within which these hymns or fragments were recited has been indicated by Hooykaas in *Stuti and Stava*. Since a knowledge of it is, in most cases, not essential for the interpretation of the hymns themselves, I shall not regularly refer to it.

3. It is of some importance to note that the Sanskrit of the hymns, as edited in *Stuti and Stava*, is already the product of some normalizing activity.⁶ In the manuscripts, the language and spelling appear modified or corrupted in several strange ways; this became no better in the many typed transcripts that were prepared in the present century by Balinese clerks.

I give two instances:

Manuscript: *Pūjā Bhūta-Yajña Buddha*, Djadi, fol. 22a.

*Datāh aṛya pami tratja, Baruna sangka bagana,
indrati waswa putjatje, pardiana twasta tja ariḥ.*

For this (at first sight) hardly comprehensible distichon, a tolerable Sanskrit text could be restored after an Indian parallel had been found in the *Baudhāyana-prayogamālā*.⁷

The Sanskrit text of the Balinese version was restored in *Stuti and Stava* as No. 226 (p. 139):

*Dhātā Aryamā Mitraś ca, Varuṇo 'Mśur Bhagas tathā |
Indro Vivasvā Pūṣā ca, Parjanyaś Tvaṣṭā ca Hariḥ ||*

⁵ For a study of its many Indian versions, see G. Bühnemann, *Budha-Kauśika's Rāmarakṣastotra. A Contribution to the Study of Sanskrit Devotional Poetry*, Vienna, Institute for Indology, 1983.

⁶ As accounted for in the critical notes and in the Introduction, p.7ff.

⁷ II, p. 50.

The stanza contains a mere enumeration of the twelve Ādityas or manifestations of the Sun. The curious fact appears that this purely Hindu *śloka* has been adopted without scruple in Buddhist ritual.

Manuscript: Njawa Wedana (read *śava-vidhāna*, 'care of the dead') Klungkung, fol. 29.

*Lingam agni widhin dewi, dñjana yogastja nan tatha,
mudra mantrantja djet sarwam, sahewa paramarta wit.*

After the experience of the first quoted stanza, this is rather easier to restore. The *śloka* has been edited in *Stuti and Stava* as No. 429 (p. 265):

*Liṅgam agnividhiṃ devīm, jñānayogasthānaṃ tathā |
mudrāmantram tyajet sarvaṃ, sa eva paramārthavit ||*

Although it is grammatically correct, there is still a metrical incongruity in the second quarter. This would be removed by reading -*yogāsanam* instead of -*yogasthānam*, thus implying a heavier corruption in the manuscript (a second source from Karang Asem has -*yogantanam*; -*n*- and -*s*- are easily confused in the script). Obviously, we have to do with a piece of good Sanskrit but up till now no Indian original has turned up. In *Stuti and Stava* the following translation has been offered:

That knower of the highest reality may abandon
the *Liṅga*, the fire cult, the Goddess
and the place for the yoga of wisdom,
the gestures and the formulas, completely and altogether.

The stanza indicates that a *sādhaka* who has realized his identity with the Supreme stands above conventional prescriptions about religious practices and *yoga*. As the word 'that' indicates, this must be a quotation taken from a context unknown to us (a *Śaiva* tract describing the way to final release?). Possibly, this text was presented as a teaching given by Śiva to his spouse. If this is true, the Accusative *devīm* in the first quarter is probably a corruption of a Vocative *devi*. In the present context, which seems to be purely *Śaiva*, I see no reason for an injunction to "abandon the Goddess"; She would hardly put up with this. It is another thing to allow abandonment of the *Liṅga*, which probably stands for conventional *Liṅga* worship.

The suggestion given above, to reconstruct -*yogāsanam* in the second quarter, leads to the translation "(the system of) postures of Classical Yoga (*jñānayoga*)", or, perhaps, reading *jñānaṃ*, to "(doctrinal) knowledge and yogic postures". As we can see, translations remain dubious as long as the text has not been reconstructed beyond any doubt. Ironically, the finding of an Indian original will perhaps in one stroke demonstrate the futility of our deliberations. It will also be clear

that none of the above two instances can be reckoned to the "hymns in Archipelago Sanskrit"; they are corruptions of originals in tolerable, although not always grammatically "pure", popular Sanskrit.

4. A typical specimen of a hymn in "Archipelago" or "Indonesianized" Sanskrit is the *Ākāśa-stava* No. 43 (also called *Daśarudra-stava* and *Śiva-stava*), a hymn to Ākāśa ('Ether' or 'Sky') who here functions (as it appears from the ritual cadre) as the presiding deity of the Zenith. There are ten stanzas. The first four are as follows:⁸

- 1 *Ākāśaṃ nirmalaṃ śūnyaṃ, gurudeva vyomāntaram*
Śiva-nīrvāṇa-vīryaṇaṃ, rekhā Oṃkāra vijayam.
- 2 *Meruśṛṅga candralokaṃ, Śivālayaṃ mūrtivīryam*
dhūpaṃ bhvanaṃ timirañ ca, 'mṛtabhūmi candraprabham.
- 3 *Devadeva mūrtibhvanaṃ, vyomāntaraṃ Śivādityam*
candralokaṃ dhūpaṃ bhvanaṃ, gurudeva mūrtivīryam.
- 4 *Oṃkāramūrti vijayaṃ, saptabindunāda-Śivam*
śūnyanirmala-bhūḥlokaṃ, 'cintyamūrti vyomāntaram.

This is not a discourse of the ordinary kind. It is formulated in a mystical kind of language that serves to evoke a static conception of divine nature. The style is characterized by absence of verbs, repetition of key terminology, absence of case grammar, instead of which we find a preponderance of the ending *-am* (which sounds particularly holy to the hearers and reciters of Bali), and mutilation of Sanskrit words as noted before. A sophisticated reader might object that since there is no argumentation, the reciters obviously did not know what they were saying and merely wanted to impress the people by a string of meaningless ritual sounds. This is only partially true. Leaving aside the fact that those who attend a ritual ceremony hardly pay any attention to what the priest is reciting (although they realize very well that his role is indispensable), it must be conceded that the priests knew the meaning of the words they recited. Or, at least, they knew *a* meaning of them. That does not necessarily agree with the meanings given in our dictionaries. The composers of these hymns, without doubt, deliberately chose their epithets in conformity with the divine subject they were addressing.

These hymns therefore are not, at the very least, beyond an attempt at translation. To facilitate such an attempt one might be tempted to (re)construct case relations by small changes in the text, for instance in 1b to *gurudevo vyomāntare*, or in 1c to *Śivo nīrvāṇaṃ vīryeṇa*. In fact, such case relations were assumed in the translation given in *Stuti and Stava*. Thus in 1b, we wrote "in the interior of the sky" on the basis of an assumed locative meaning behind the form *vyomāntaram*. But the manuscripts themselves contain no trace of sentence construction by

⁸ Text as in *Stuti and Stava*, cit., p. 43.

case forms in this or related hymns. Besides, their maltreatment of some words to fill up the metre strongly suggests that the composers indeed did not care a bit about grammatical relations, let alone their correct linguistic expression.

How to proceed with a translation of such stanzas, when it must be attempted anyway? It is clear that the static, formulaic nature of the hymn should be maintained as much as possible. This implies that identical formulas and expressions must be translated correspondingly. For instance, *vyomāntaram* which occurs thrice in the stanzas quoted above (1b, 3b, 4d) is to be rendered by an identical phrase: "in the interior of the sky", as was done in *Stuti and Stava*; it would perhaps had been more true to the original intention to simply say "the interior of the sky". In that case, the translator is content with rendering merely the evocative, "presentative" function suggested by the celebrated ending *-am*. The term *vyomāntaram*, through its frequency, clearly serves as a "motif" or "theme" in this part of the hymn (it is not repeated in the last six stanzas).

Another "theme" is the identity of Ākāśa with Śiva whose name occurs in all four quoted stanzas. The composer thus quietly impresses the hearer's mind with the Sky's identity with the Supreme God. In 3b, Śiva is further referred to as the real identity of the Sun (Śivāditya), a most important prominent feature in Balinese Śiva worship. Such "themes" and "identifications" are the most prominent characteristic of this kind of ritually embedded litanies that seem to serve their contexts very well despite their aberrant language and style.

For the translator (who is also an interpreter), some difficult questions remain. One of these is the problem of how to separate the strings of words occurring in the stanzas quoted above. For instance, the position and meaning of *vīryam* in stanzas 2b and 3d, and the presumably identical *vīryaṇam* in 1c, is a point of deliberation. In 1c, *-vīryaṇam* has been combined with *Śivanīrvāṇa-* in the edited text but in the translation of *Stuti and Stava*, it is taken as an independent utterance: the passage was rendered into English as "Śiva's highest heaven, of heroic nature" (it was assumed that *-ṇam* here, as elsewhere in the collection, is just a meaningless metre-filling device). Literally taken, *vīryaṇam* would therefore mean '(its) heroism' but we felt free to translate it as an adjective. Blurring of the difference of substantive-adjective can be accounted for as an "Indonesianizing" feature.

In 2b and 3d, *-vīryam* is considered to have been combined with *mūrti-* into a compound (the words occur together in this way also in other similar hymns). The best translation is obtained when we interpret this compound as an "inverted *tatpuruṣa*" (instead of *vīryamūrti*) meaning 'an embodiment of courage', as was printed twice in *Stuti and Stava*.⁹ Such inversions occur elsewhere in Balinese corpus; they are in

⁹ T. Goudriaan and C. Hooykaas, *Stuti and Stava*, cit., p. 44.

fact well known from certain original Tantras of India.¹⁰ In this case, we might as well assume an inverted *bahuvrīhi* "(Ākāśa) whose manifestation is heroism".

A last point should be made concerning the translation of *vīryam* as 'heroism' or 'courage'. This looks as if mechanically taken from the dictionaries. 'Heroism' seems like a rather senseless characterization of the static divinity of Śiva-Ākāśa. Would it not be better to interpret *vīryam* as a special realization of autonomous divine power, viz. the faculty to maintain the immutable divine nature in all circumstances? Such a meaning, translatable by terms such as 'unchangeability' and 'unassailability' is attested in Pāñcarātra theology (as in *Lakṣmī Tantra* 2, 32).¹¹ Thus, *mūrtivīryam* might mean 'an unassailable manifestation' and *Śiva-nirvāṇa-vīryaṇam* 'Śiva's highest heaven which is unassailable'. We could, of course, here go into a discussion of *nirvāṇa* and its rendering by 'highest heaven' but this is not the place for such exhaustive treatment. I would rather consider another specimen from the Balinese collection.

5. No. 381 from *Stuti and Stava* is a short hymn (two stanzas) prestigiously entitled *Vedasāra*, 'Essence of the Veda'. It is directed to Viṣṇu as the awe-inspiring god of the noblemen who boast of their own simpler form of worship called "*pūjā kṣatriya*". Its recitation is said to be effective in battle; I cannot repeat here the detailed injunctions about its application. The hymn should be preceded by the syllables *Om*, *Um* (of Viṣṇu), and *Śrī*.

Janārdana labekaya, sarovaṅka ravādbhuta
tasya micaraṇa krūra, vaśyaṃ tejo śastra dīpa

Prāyaścitte kandanāstra, kādbhuta kāla jaye tu
vaśīkaro devo Viṣṇuḥ, sarvaśatrubhayaṃkaraḥ.

Part of this text has already undergone some fashioning of spelling, which resulted in recognizable Sanskrit words and even a correct hemistich in 2cd. In *Stuti and Stava*, *labekaya* in the first quarter of stanza 1 was modelled to *labhet kāryam*, resulting in correct metre and tolerable sense but the solution is still not beyond doubt. In 1c, *mi-*, which looks like a prefix of Indonesian type (verbal marker?), was amended to *-pi*: *tasyāpi*, etc. And in 2b, the *ka-* in *kādbhuta* had to be interpreted as an Old Javanese prefix of eventive-passive meaning, something like '(the enemy) overwhelmed by the supernatural (power of

¹⁰ See T. Goudriaan and J. A. Schoterman, *The Kūbjikāmatatantra, Kulālikāmnāya Version, critical edition*, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1988 (*Orientalia Rheno-Traiectina*, Vol. 30), p. 85.

¹¹ See S. Gupta, *Lakṣmī Tantra*, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1972, p. 11.

Viṣṇu)', and more concisely translated with 'terrified'. The attempt at translating the first stanza in *Stuti and Stava* results in the following:

Janārdana, He will obtain His objective,
; His sound evokes terror;
 and His strides evoke horror,
 His overwhelming power, fiery energy, flashing weapons.

The first half of the second stanza could be translated only in fragmentary form:

For ritual correction.....weapon,
 terrified.....in victory.

The second half, after restoration, offered no difficulties:

God Viṣṇu is an overwhelming God,
 Who inspires all enemies with fear.

The rendering of the first stanza is still sound in my eyes; at least it is difficult to find something better. In 1a, Janārdana 'the Inciter of men' is an apt epithet to begin a hymn to a god of battle. The stem form has of course been taken as a Nominative. The phrase "He will obtain His objective" is, as we saw, the reflection of a doubtful reconstruction. Instead of *kāryam* 'objective', *kāyam* 'body' would also be possible, perhaps resulting in "he will take hold of (the enemy's?) body". But then, the verb *labhet* looks an irregularity in an "Indonesianized" hymn, and the chances are that something else has been meant. In 1b, *sarovaṅka* was hopelessly given up.

In 1c, the reference to Viṣṇu's (three) strides seems attractive but *caraṇa* could as well be 'ways of acting' or 'behavior'. It is strange (but not without parallel) that the beloved ending *-am* here has fallen out in *caraṇa-* and *krūra-*. In 1d, the absence of syntactical connection is rendered in the translation as a piece of "evocative" style. The word *vaśyam*, originally an adjective meaning 'being under one's power', was interpreted as a substantive like *vaśam* (assuming a pleonastic addition of *-y-*). We have again *vaśīkaro* in 2c, so that there is a strong indication that Viṣṇu conquers his enemies not only by sheer bodily strength but also by magical powers.

In general, although the translation of these two stanzas remain very unsatisfactory, the message of Viṣṇu's fierce aggressiveness can sufficiently be understood from them. The Balinese *kṣatriya* would have been comforted by their recitation in moments of danger. Our conclusion must be that in seemingly hopeless cases, an attempt of interpretation of at least parts of such poems can be very useful. An additional factor is that pondering over a possible translation urges an editor or interpreter towards simple and sensible emendations or more

logical connections between words or parts of compounds. Of course, such a "translator" runs the risk that his hypotheses are afterwards exposed as blunders in case a better or correct Indian or Indonesian version is found. For the two stanzas discussed here, such a case is not entirely out of the question in view of the correct hemistich 2cd and the occurrence of several Sanskrit words that are not at all frequent in other "Indonesianized" hymns, such as the verb *labhet* in 1a (if correctly reconstructed!).

6. There are a number of Balinese hymns, the language of which approaches reasonable standards of popular Sanskrit devotional poetry. But sometimes they contain peculiar expressions- their use of verbs may be somewhat unexpected -- while occasional passages give the impression of having been clumsily taken from elsewhere. A few hymns of this class directed to goddesses, and among them we find the following very frequent hymn to Śrī (Śrīstava) that occurs in at least twenty manuscripts of death ritual, Buddhist as well as Hindu, and also in Buddhist daily ritual. Of the seven stanzas, I quote only the first two:¹²

*Oṃ Śrīdevi mahāvaktrā catuvarṇā caturbhujā
prajñāvīryasārajñeyā, cintāmaṇīr urusmṛtā.*

*Śrīdevi satatam mūrdhnā tvāṃ ca namāmi śaktitāḥ
dakṣiṇāstu mahābhaktyā, jñātumī (v)ara mama stutim.*

Translated in *Stuti and Stava* as:

Oṃ the Goddess Śrī with the great face,
with four colours, with four arms,
is to be known by essential wisdom and heroism;
[She is] the widely-known dream-jewel.

O Goddess Śrī, bowing with my head,
I always honour Thee as well as I can;
a sacrificial gift would be constituted by great devotion,
choose my hymn to acquaint Thyself with it.

These stanzas contain several minor problems of interpretation and, accordingly, of translation. The first, and perhaps the most compelling, is the characterization of the lovely Goddess in stanza 1a as *mahāvaktrā*. What does 'great-faced' mean? 'Big-faced'? Hardly; this would be a characteristic for demons (as in the *Harivaṃśa*, according to Monier-Williams' dictionary). Since this term serves as an introduction, it must have meant to express the poet's awe and reverence while approaching the divine Lady. This presumably devotional attitude would be better

¹² T. Goudriaan and C. Hooykaas, *Stuti and Stava*, cit., p. 360, No. 600.

rendered by 'of majestic countenance', which would suit the poem much better. It would imply that the Goddess' beauty should not be admired like that of a mortal woman. It is divine, serene, and supramundane. Of course, such an interpretation is hypothetical in the absence of parallels but I have a feeling we are on the right track with it.

Also in the third quarter, the translation given above does not look like a final solution. The compound is strange. *Prajñā* and *vīrya* seem to form a *dvandva* all right: 'wisdom and power of maintenance'.¹³ Addition of *-sāra* 'essence' would naturally create a *tatpuruṣa*: 'essence of...', hence 'essential...'. But the addition of a gerundive *-jñeyā* to such a compound to form a new *tatpuruṣa* ('to be known by...') or *karmadhāraya* ('to be known as...') seems to overstrain the idiom of compounded formation. One would rather not expect *jñeyā* to be compounded with the preceding words. Besides, the critical apparatus in *Stuti and Stava* informs us that the non-Buddhist manuscripts here write not *-sāra* but *-sura* (which would, by the way, better suit the metre). One is thus tempted to ask oneself whether *jñeyā* can be corrupt and conceal a word beginning with *su-* such as *surājñī* (*yā*). A discussion of such details shows that more problems may turn up than dreamt of during a first acquaintance.

The next quarter, 1d, hides a related difficulty. The word *urusmṛtā* is good Sanskrit (it is not attested in Monier-Williams but that, of course, means very little); it even suggests the sacred because *uru-* is somewhat archaic. But this very point justifies a touch of suspicion in this kind of literature. And another thing: at least six manuscripts write *urumutaḥ*, which might conceal the name of Lakṣmī's (and Viṣṇu's) mount Garuḍa (*-mañiru-* would then have to be an old misreading for *-mañiga-*). It is true that this would result in a strange kind of message in a clumsy language: 'a dream-jewel for Garuḍa'?

In 2b, we read the in itself perfect *śaktitaḥ* 'according to my power', hence 'as well as I can', in an unexpected context. In a devotional context like this such a term would occur by preference in a declaration of the worshipper's readiness to spend from his earthly possessions as much as he can afford in the worship of his god or goddess. It would be a strain to the context to find this meaning here just after 'bowing with my head'. Instead, *bhaktitaḥ* would be welcome, 'with devotion', but this does not seem to be given any of the manuscripts; besides, the next quarter also contains *mahābhaktyā*, which would then become a pleonasm. Nevertheless, what all manuscripts (according to a critical note) really do read is *sa sthitaḥ*, which can also point to *saṁsthitaḥ*. The good-looking *śaktitaḥ* is, in fact, an emendation. It was introduced (together with many others) by the famous French scholar Sylvain Lévi who published a selection of Sanskrit text from Bali after a stay of some weeks on the

¹³ On *vīrya*, see above.

¹⁴ S. Lévi, *Sanskrit Texts from Bali* (*Balidvīpagraṇthāḥ*), Baroda, Gaekwad

island.¹⁴ The freedom that Lévi allowed himself in dealing with this material should put us on our guard against his edition. Returning to our text, if we keep *sa(ṃ)sthitaḥ* in 2b, the translation of the first hemistich might be:

O Goddess Śrī, I always honour Thee, bowing
with my head, taking my stand (before Thee).

Also *dakṣiṇāstu* in 2c is an emanation by Lévi; all manuscripts give the mysterious *daniksustu*. We accepted Lévi's suggestion because we did not know any better. But Lévi's proposals were by no means always followed. In 3b, for instance, where most manuscripts write (*snigdha*)*gatva*, we amended to *-gātrā* 'of smooth limbs', where Lévi wrote *-rātram* with unclear meaning (Lévi did not add a translation).

This is not yet the whole story. In the next hymn edited in *Stuti and Stava* (No. 601), characterized as "Archipelago" Sanskrit, the first stanza of No. 600 is repeated and then followed by another version of the same in which *devī* has been replaced by *guru* and the endings have now been changed into masculines:

- 1 *Oṃ Śrīdevī mahāvaktrā, caturbhujā caturvarṇā*
prajñāparasārajñeyā, cintāmaṇir urusmṛtā.
- 2 *Oṃ Śrīguru mahāvaktra, caturbhujā pañcavarṇa*
prajñāparasāro jñeyah, cintāmaṇik urutmuka.

The second half of the stanza 1 was translated as follows:

To be experienced by essential and supreme wisdom,
the dream-jewel widely renowned.

The modified stanza 2 was rendered:

Oṃ the Venerable Guru with the great face,
with four arms and five colors;
to be known as the supreme essence of wisdom,
the dream-jewel.....

The first stanza, the epithets *caturbhujā* and *caturvarṇa* have changed place in 1b, which results in bad metre. In 1c, the *vīrya* of No. 600 has been replaced by *para* for unclear reasons. It should be noted that in 1d, as well as in 2d, most manuscripts give (*-maṇi*)*kurutmūta* or *-ka* (in 2d). The first stanza, which is only a remodelling (and by no means an improvement) of 600, 1, was edited in the same spirit with restoration of correct Sanskrit forms. This was not done for the second stanza, which is

a manipulated version directed to another deity. It contains the message that the *guru* is identical, or at least identico-functional, with the goddess Śrī.¹⁵ His reach is even more comprehensive because he encompasses five *varṇa*-s instead of four (vs. 2b). Surprisingly, the third quarter gives a correct ending in *-sāro*, which leads to a difference in the translation: 'to be known as....'. Also the next two stanzas (601, 3 and 4), composed in "Indonesianized" language, are devoted to the *guru*'s greatness. The whole hymn of eight stanzas is of a mystical Śaiva character and abounds (in 3ff) in mantric syllables repeated without much profit in the translation.

A curious parallel for the introduction of the *Guru* as deity of a stanza originally directed to another patron was found in the Nepalese manuscripts of the *Kubjikā Upaniṣad*,¹⁶ *paṭala* 7, stanza 8. This stanza is for the greater part identical with *Atharvaveda-saṃhitā* 10,8,7, *ekacakram* etc. Its original deity is the Sun but in the *Kubjikan* version the *guru* is introduced in the fourth quarter. Instead of the *Atharvanic* version

yād asyārdham kīva tād babhūva

as to His (other) half, where has it come to be?

we now read

yad asyārdham gururūpam ugram

as to His (other) half, it is the *Guru*'s fearful form.

In this way, exegesis appears to be the art of filling in answers for questions deliberately left open in basic scripture.

7. The instances given above cannot but give a very incomplete picture of the varied landscape of Balinese Sanskrit. Also, the translation problems that present themselves to those who want to interpret this collection are of a most bewildering nature. Incidentally, a translation is impossible in the absence of further information but as a rule it can be maintained that all hymns and stanzas can be translated at least provisionally and conjecturally. The incoherence and great diversity of quality within the corpus precludes the formulation of standard procedures of translation. Yet, a few general statements can be made. They are by no means of a surprising nature but largely agree with a common sense approach towards poetry in popular Sanskrit, or perhaps, even to translation activity in general. The initial axiom in our case is that translation of the

¹⁵ Cf. 601, 3a Śrīdevī Śrīguru.

¹⁶ Edited and translated in T. Goudriaan and J. A. Schoterman, *The Kubjikā Upaniṣad. Edited with a Translation, Introduction, Notes and Appendices*, Groningen, Egbert Forsten, 1994.

Balinese corpus is worthwhile because these texts have a meaning based upon religious insights or convictions.

To summarize:

1. The translation problems that present themselves in this corpus cannot be separated from textual criticism, which often means so-called "higher criticism".
2. In case of a bad text in ungrammatical language, a tentative translation is better than no translation at all. Attempting the translation can help us (or can help others) to better understand the text.
3. A formulaic, static text should be rendered by a translation in an equally formulaic style. Identical formulas should be translated identically.
4. The translator should take care not to "improve" too much upon the original by introduction of case grammar or conjugated verbal forms not expressed in that original. One may do so in rather self-evident cases.
5. Translation of compounds should always be preceded by a sensible determination of the type of compound (copulative, etc.) that may have been meant.
6. One should not content oneself with mechanically taking over, or choosing from, established dictionary meanings.
7. A metrically bound text should be translated in rhythmical language that, if possible, approaches poetical standard; prose should be translated in prose.

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Kālikāpurāṇa

by

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The translation of a portion of the *Kālikāpurāṇa* has been published in 1972, more than twenty years ago. Writing about it after so many years demands some explanation. Hence I would like to start with a brief personal note about my former motives to translate this text in the first place, and the present reasons for looking back at it. Thereafter, I will discuss some of *rudhirādhyāya* and the textual problems I found in my way when I tried to translate this text. I conclude with a few remarks about ritual violence for which the *Kālikāpurāṇa* is particularly known.

1. Introduction

The *Kālikāpurāṇa* has the fame of being unorthodox, excentric, even violent mainly because of one chapter, which is ominously called *rudhirādhyāya*, 'sanguinary chapter'. This chapter contains a detailed description of animal and human sacrifice and had been translated as early as 1799 by W. C. Blaquiére. The translation was published in *Asiatic Researches*, the journal of the then newly founded Asiatic Society of Bengal in which the very first translations of Sanskrit literature into English appeared. After Blaquiére's publication, the work was neglected for a long time.¹

Somehow, this ill-fated reputation attracted me and I accepted the suggestion of Professor Gonda, my professor of Sanskrit at Utrecht University, to make a translation which was in due time to be submitted as a thesis.

The main data about the *Kālikāpurāṇa* became accessible to me from R. C. Hazra's *Studies in the Upapurāṇas*, which was published in 1963. I learnt that the text in its present form is a *Śākta Upapurāṇa*, dating from the tenth or eleventh century. The work as it is now was probably composed in the North-East of the Indian subcontinent in a region near present Assam which is called Kāmarūpa.

Hazra's survey of the contents gave me the opportunity to glance through the text and to select a sensible part for translation. I decided to leave the mythological section aside for the time being and to focus on the section about Tantric rituals, which seemed to be a self-contained unit. A rather primitive Bombay edition published in 1891 and again in 1901, which belongs to the famous Caland Library of Utrecht University, was put at my disposal. B. Śāstri's edition of 1972 came too late for me.²

¹ For a survey of the work that has been done on the *Kālikāpurāṇa* I would like to refer to the "Introduction" of 1972, p. 1-3. This survey, of course, should be updated now.

² This edition is based on the Calcutta edition of *Pañcānana Tarkaratna*, which

I plunged into the subject. Soon after, I found myself in the middle of nowhere, struggling to make some sense of a text I hardly could understand. I remember very well that I read as many publications on Hindu Tantrism as I could lay hands on. They were not many at that time. I went through the works of Arthur Avalon alias Sir John Woodroffe, Heinrich Zimmer's still valuable *Kunstform und Yoga im indischen Kultbild* from 1926, and a few others which do not need to be mentioned here. I was of course familiar with Gonda's own survey of Hindu Tantrism and Śāktism in *Religionen Indiens II* published in 1963, which contains a wealth of data, and I became acquainted with André Padoux's work on Hindu Tantrism; text editions of Hindu *Tantra*-s were hardly available at that time, apart from extremely poor editions. But I was lucky to find a small and old book on Durgāpūjā, which was written by Pratapa Chandra Ghosh in 1871.

In spite of this attempt to improve my Tantric background, the Sanskrit of the *Kālikāpurāṇa* remained abstruse to me until I had found the means to cope with the often defective text of the printed editions, and with the shorthand formulas obviously meant for the initiated adepts, not for an outsider like me. I will come back to this problem in the next paragraph.

Only the first part of the translation of the section on Tantric rituals was submitted as a doctoral thesis and published afterwards. The translation of the second part, including a new translation of the 'sanguinary chapter', has long been completed but it still remained unpublished. During a brief stay in Nepal in 1973, I offered a copy of my thesis to a Nepalese acquaintance, Mr. Purnaharsa Bajracharya, whom I met at the National Archives of Kathmandu, through Dr. Michael Witzel who was then Head of the Nepal Research Centre in Kathmandu. I remember Mr. Purnaharsa looking through my book for a short while. Then he kindly told me that in Nepal a work like this would never have been exposed to the public, whereupon he quoted a few Sanskrit verses, which I tried to understand without being able to say one Sanskrit line in return. For a moment, I was taken aback by his comment but after a while I thought he had made a point.

It was, however, for quite different reasons that I lost interest in publishing the second part of the translation. I shifted my activity to another field of Indology, and became absorbed in the history of Indian art, in particular Buddhist and Hindu iconography. After my struggle with the *Kālikāpurāṇa* I was not convinced anymore that I should spend a whole lifetime on some utterly dubious rituals, which moreover were partly abhorrent. I could not locate these Kālikā magicians anyway. The usual references to the "Little tradition" of Bengal and Assam did not satisfy me at all. It became my considered opinion that these forms of human behaviour, however much religiously inspired, should simply be

I was able to consult, and "two sets of manuscripts collected in Assam. The two manuscripts are almost identical" (See the "Foreword" to Sastri's edition p. 5).

banned from our memory, at least from mine. Kālikā, I thought, I had forgotten.

She was right behind my back. A few years ago, the violent character of Hindu art -- and to some extent of Buddhist art as well -- started to intrigue me. In their role of commissioners of temples and monumental sculptures, kings and warlords favoured extremely violent iconographic formulas. The figure of Durgā Mahiṣasuramardīṇī treading triumphantly upon the head of her slain enemy is merely one out of many.³

Closer inspection gave me the impression that what could be called "battlefield iconography" seems to dominate Indian monumental sculptures from fairly early times onward. Any interpretation of Indian art, even when religious symbolism is involved, should take account of this heavy layer of flat, two-dimensional violence which immediately makes itself clear even to onlookers from outside. At the same time, I came across studies by Shulman and Hildebeitel, who examined the battlefield metaphor in epic literature and theatrical performance, drawing attention to extremely violent passages which are either recited or performed on the stage.

It startled me that heroism, *vīrya*, forms such an integral part of Tantrism. Besides, the connection between particularly violent Tantric rituals and the *kṣatriya*, foremost the rulerking, became more and more apparent. Tantric rites played an important role in these circles when the war season was about to start. The army was to be consecrated, priests were summoned to carry out rites and to invoke the goddess Durgā or other violent divine characters in order to protect the dynasty and the city.

The rituals were generally commissioned by the king or his immediate subordinates, and were carried out by priests, *sādhaka*-s as they are called. These *sādhaka*-s, as Mme H. Brunner has shown, were highly respected priests and magicians, and were regarded as a guarantee for the welfare and prosperity of the country. They had the authority to perform rites for the benefit of the individual citizens and for the community as a whole, on the basis of the "magical" powers they were supposed to possess.

In this context, Tantric rites were not performed to overcome obstacles on the way to final liberation, but to conquer real enemies and to win real kingdoms. The violent character of these ceremonies should be held against the harsh light, not of tribal customs or what is sometimes called the "Little Tradition", but of city culture and the codes of behavior of the *kṣatriya* elite, that means the "Great Tradition".

This view brought about a new perspective in respect of the "message" of the *Kālikāpurāṇa*, in particular of the part that I had translated, and

³ See my forthcoming articles on "Code of Behavior and Iconographic Form"; and on "Iconography of the Battlefield: Narasiṃha and Durgā", cf. the Bibliography.

the section that is still to be published. The picture just sketched is exactly the context in which blood sacrifice in this text appears. The text seemed written to regulate blood sacrifice as an official Tantric rite to be performed by *sādhaka*-s for the benefit of the *kṣatriya* elite. I mentioned this view to Professor Gonda when I met him not long before he died; he reacted immediately and asked whether I could prove that. At the end of this paper, I will try to formulate a preliminary answer to his question.

This personal note about my ambivalent attitude towards the *Kālikāpurāṇa* seemed necessary to me to justify why I accepted the invitation to write about a translation which I have left unnoticed for such a long time.

2. Textual problems: *mantra*-s and some obscure terms

After a rather unsatisfactory start, it became clear to me that the Bombay edition and two Sanskrit dictionaries, that of Monnier-Williams and the *Petersburger Wörterbuch* by Böhtlingk, were not sufficient to overcome the serious textual problems I encountered when I tried to translate the first chapters of the text. I knew of another edition printed in Calcutta in 1910, of which the India Office Library was so kind to send me a photocopy. The Sanskrit text of this edition differed from that of the Bombay edition in a few points. However, to my surprise the text was accompanied by a Bengali translation. It appeared to be a paraphrased version, which was not based on the Sanskrit text printed above it but on an unknown manuscript, used by the editor Pañcānana Tarkaratna and his colleague Hrsikesa Shastri. It proved to be of great value.

At the same time I realised that any serious translation of a text which was printed indeed but not properly edited would be almost equivalent to making a preliminary critical edition. That, however, was not my objective. Nevertheless, the corruptions and omissions in the editions at my disposal, made it an absolute necessity to select a limited number of manuscripts in order to overcome the obstacles which were inherent in the transmission of the text or at least to limit them to a reasonable extent.

Three manuscripts were selected, all of them written in a relatively late Bengali script, from Marburg and Tübingen, both in Germany, and a photocopy of another ms. from Calcutta.⁴ Much to my regret, I could not check the unique Newari ms. belonging to the library of the Sanskrit College in Calcutta. This ms. is supposed to contain the text of the *Kālikāpurāṇa*, and is dated 202 Nepal Era, i.e. most probably 1080 A.D., a date that would be close to the composition of the work. The mss. selected were not more than a few centuries old, but they represent different lines of transmission.

The unreliability of the printed text became all the more a problem because the shorthand and sometimes cryptic descriptions of the ritual

⁴ For references and data of these mss., see my Introduction of 1972, p. 37.

procedures were not easy to understand. The *mantra*-s accompanying these rites are often not directly mentioned but defined according to rules which are not made explicit. Similar methods of describing *mantra*-s in a hidden language are known from other Tantric works, a.o. the *Śāradā-Tilaka*. A list containing *bījamantra*-s and their equivalents was published in the series of Avalon's Tantric Texts. Several others are printed now. However, the system followed in the *Kālikāpurāṇa* turned out to be different in a number of respects. It is quite possible that the various Tantric schools developed their own series of equivalents.

The system that syllables of *mantra*-s are named after particular deities is known in Tantrism. However, the syllables can also be defined according to their relative position in the Sanskrit alphabet. For instance, the sound 'vaṃ' is called *Varuṇa*'s *bījamantra*, which is derived from the first syllable of the deity's name. However, the sound *vaṃ* is not mentioned in the text but it is defined as "the syllable following the *la*, provided with a moon and a drop" (59, 142=*57, 142).⁵

laparaś candrabindubhyāṃ bījaṃ vāruṇam ucyate

The technique of defining *mantra*-s in this way is first introduced in chapter 54=*52, the very first chapter of the ritual section I was translating. The text transmission, however, formed a serious problem in understanding the passage (in Śāstri's edition the text is still not completely correct). In vs 10-12 of the Bombay edition the *mantra* of Vaiṣṇavi is defined as follows:

*hāntāntapūrvo rāntaś ca nānto ṇāntas tathaiva ca |
kaikādaśaṣṭādiṣaṣṭaḥ khānto bindupuraḥsaraḥ ||*

At first the text defied any sort of translation. After consulting the mss. the situation improved but it seemed impossible to establish a more or less correct text, let alone a translation. The most efficient instrument to solve the problem was a cursory reading of the whole section on

⁵ In text quotations from the *Kālikāpurāṇa*, the first number refers to the Bombay edition and my translation, the second number with the asterisk to the new edition by Biswarayan Sastri. The abbreviation Ma refers to the manuscript from Marburg, Tü to the other one from Tübingen, and Ca to the photocopy of the ms. from Calcutta.

Mr. Sastri mentions in a note that this line is added in a printed book: *mudritapustake adhikaḥ*, suggesting that it does not belong to the "original" text. The line may originally be a gloss indeed, but it is found in the Bombay and in the Calcutta editions, and also in the three manuscripts I consulted, although with some variants. Ma makes a common mistake and omits one syllable, reading: *lapaś candra* in 142 c, Tü significantly has: *vapuraś candra*, which comes to the same and is a nice explanation as well. Ca has the correct reading.

⁶ I still remember with gratefulness that I learned the technique from Prof.

Tantric worship. The technique was new to me at that time.⁶ It appeared that the *mantra* of Vaiṣṇavī was mentioned in 58=*56, in three different ways; and in chapter 80=*78, 3-4 it was found again and explained. By comparing these passages it was not difficult to find out that the *vaiṣṇavīmantra* should consist of every first syllable of each of the eight groups of syllables of the Sanskrit alphabet: *a, ka, ca, ta, ta, pa, ya, śa*. These syllables are indicated by other syllables of the alphabet, followed by a number or *-ānta* or *-ādi*, meaning: 'following' or 'preceding' respectively, although different types of *composita* are used, by which double meanings are created. Moreover the *mantra* should be read backwards. The translation I proposed was:

"the syllable preceding the one of which the following of the following is the ha, the one following the ma, the one following the na, and also the one following the ṇa, the eleventh syllable from the ka onwards and the sixth syllable from the ka which is reckoned to be the first, the syllable of which the kha is the following one, and as the first (of the whole series) the syllable of Viṣṇu".⁷

A confirmation of both text and interpretation came from yet another source, viz. the Bengali paraphrase mentioned above. The Bengali translator was "so kind" as to put each syllable of the *mantra* between brackets right after its cryptic definition, viz.: *sa, ya, pa, ta, ta, ca, ka, a*, and added that the *mantra* should be read "*vāmāvarṭte pāṭha*", i.e. in a reversed order.

Afterwards I was able to make the necessary emendations, and I corrected the text as follows, rather apodictically as I see it now. In the first *pāda*: *rāntaś* although not impossible should be read *māntaś*, which is the reading of the three mss.; this reading is also found in note 59 of the critical apparatus of Śāstri's edition. In the third *pāda* the correct reading is: *kaikādaśaḥ kādiṣaṣṭaḥ*, which is found in two of the three mss., the third ms. having *kaikādaśas kādiṣaṣṭaḥ*. In the fourth *pāda* one ms., the Calcutta edition and Śāstri's new edition, which is based on the Calcutta edition, read: *viṣṇupuraḥsaraḥ*, which is the correct reading.

To overcome a certain amount of these text problems, the important point was to make a combined use of these three kinds of sources: first, a collation of the text of the editions with the readings found in the mss. selected; second, a full use of the explanations the *Kālikāpurāṇa* itself had

Tilman Vetter, now again my colleague at Leiden University.

⁷ Although Śāstri's text is not correct, he managed to give more or less the correct translation in volume 2 of his new edition of 1991, which is accompanied by a translation, but without mentioning his sources. My translation, however, was definitely known to him. I gave him a copy of my thesis when he visited Utrecht University. He does not mention it at all.

to offer in parallel passages, often occurring in later chapters and in a different context; and third, the evidence of the Bengali paraphrase, which often functioned as an informant. The system seemed to work.

Other obstacles were found in shorthand formulas which are used to indicate whole mental or ritual procedures which have to be carried out by the *sādhaka*. The author of this section of the *Kālikāpurāṇa* does not care to be explicit in these matters. The cursory reading had revealed that some shorthand terms occurring in the first chapters were worked out later. Moreover, the text contains several explicit references to expositions given previously. I only give one example out of many. The *mantra*-s formed again the main obstacle for a correct interpretation.

To any *sādhaka* it must have been clear what was meant by the two words *dahana* and *plavana*, 'burning and bathing', which occur seven times without any explanation in the fragment I was translating (55=*53, 8-9; 55=*53, 14; 59=*57, 74-75; 66=*64, 74-75; 66=*64, 85-86; 68=*66, 6 and 69=*67, 14-15). The meaning of these terms only became clear to me after reading two other passages which placed them in their proper context. The terms appeared to stand for a meditative process of which 'desiccation', or 'burning and bathing' are merely phases. Hence the *Agnipurāṇa* 33, 29 uses *śoṣaṇādi*, 'desiccation, etc.', apparently denoting the first stage. The complete procedure is called *bhūtaśuddhi*, 'purification of the elements'. The terms *dehaśuddhi* or *kayaśuddhi*, 'purification of the body', are also used, for instance in parallel passages of *Agnipurāṇa* and *Garuḍapurāṇa*.⁸

This procedure of purification, which is only carried out in the mind, is part of a meditation immediately preceding the actual visualisation of the anthropomorphic form of the deity who is to be evoked in the *sādhaka*'s own body. His heart is going to be the 'seat' (*pīṭha*) of the deity. Hence, the procedure involves the complete purification of the *sādhaka*'s bodily elements in order to make it ready to receive the divine guest.

Chapters 55=*53, 15-18 and 59=*57, 100-103 are the only passages in which the procedure is fully explained. The text of 59=*57, 100-103 is straightforward and not obscured by corruptions. In my translation it reads:

"The body being composed of the five elements, it is always impure by nature; it is slimy by the mucus, feces and urine which are characterized by a stench of filth; it is unprepared by the continuous streams of semen and spit. The five gross elements are present in it as germs. In order to purify these germs, which are all the elements present in the body, i.e. air, fire, earth, water and space, one must accomplish the acts of desiccating (*śoṣaṇa*), burning (*dahana*), removal of the ashes (*bhasmaprotsāda*), creating a shower of *amṛta* (*amṛtavarṣaṇa*) and bathing (*plavana*

⁸ See my Introduction of 1972, p. 16, notes 3 and 4.

or *āplavana*), only in one's mind, and in order to attain purity".

How these acts are to be carried out is not explained in this passage. However, the same procedure is indicated in the earlier passage of 55=*53, 15-18, and here the accompanying *mantra*-s are added. However, the text is again corrupt where these *mantra*-s are concerned. The following interpretation, which is not meant as a translation,⁹ is based upon a comparison of the readings of the mss. :

"In order to purify himself the *sādhaka* should, purely mentally, generate a desiccating wind by pronouncing the sound '*yaṃ*', which is the germ-syllable of Vāyu; a burning fire by pronouncing the sound '*raṃ*', being Agni's syllable; removal of the ashes (which is not fully mentioned here) by uttering Yama's *bīja* which is *maṃ*; Indra's *bīja*, which is '*laṃ*', creates a shower of *amṛta* and bathing is carried out by means of Varuṇa's sound '*vaṃ*'".

The sounds mentioned are again indicated by their syllables and the addition that they are to be provided with the nasal sound. The transmission of the text with regard to these syllables is full of mistakes, and of attempts by the copyists to write something that was more or less meaningful to them. Nevertheless, when combined, these data led to a reasonable result. The Bombay edition uses the phrase *parasthānaparāś caitaiḥ* in 17c, in order to define the syllables meant. These words have a nice philosophical flavour but are meaningless in this context. The reading of Ca is only slightly better: *yavasthānasyetaiḥ*, as two of the lost syllables were saved: *ya* and *va*. Tü: *antasthābhir hakāreṇa* probably is near the truth; and in Ma: *yaralavāś caite ca* the last part *caite ca* may be a corruption but this reading gives most of the information needed to solve the riddle.

It all comes down to five syllables, namely the four semivowels and a fifth. The copyist of the Tübingen ms. apparently knew about the technical term '*antaḥstha*' as denoting the semivowels *ya*, *ra*, *la* and *va*, although his spelling went wrong. For the fifth syllable he adds the word *hakāreṇa*, "together with the syllable *ha*". Whether the term *antaḥsthābhir* may have been the original reading or a gloss cannot be established anymore. But the combination of the readings of Ma and Tü makes sense. The semivowels *ya*, *ra*, *la* and *va* are correct considering the names of four of the five deities mentioned. Both from the *Kālikāpurāṇa* and from leading Tantric texts like the *Śāradā-Tilaka* for instance, we know that Vāyu's *bīja* is *yaṃ* (wind), Agni's is *raṃ* (fire), Indra's is *laṃ* (also the earth-*bīja*) and Varuṇa's is *vaṃ* (water). The meaning of these semivowels in this context must have escaped the editor of the Bombay

⁹ For a literal translation see my translation of 1972, p. 45. Śāstri is again delivering a translation which does not correspond to the text in his edition, without mentioning his sources.

edition, hence he wrote a few philosophical words instead. The copyist of the Marburg ms. was apparently aware of this technical terminology and wrote *ya*, *ra*, *la* and *va*, but the last syllable was lost.

Whether the reading *hakāreṇa* meaning "together with the syllable *ha*" is correct or not, cannot be established anymore unless we know more about the fifth god in the series. Here too the readings of the editions and mss. are not unanimous. The mention of Yama is almost dangerously consistent because of the association with the phase of the removal of the ashes. This name is found indeed in the printed editions, but Tü reads Candra instead, and Ma simply repeats Vāyu. The syllable *ha* is mostly associated with Śiva or his other name Śambhu. Yama's syllable is *ma*. A reading *makāreṇa* instead of *hakāreṇa* seemed a reasonable guess.

The obstacles which originally blocked my view were not completely removed, but this was the maximum result I could achieve. The passage was apparently not understood by the Bengali translator, and therefore hardly touched by him.

These intricacies formed a major problem in translating this part of the *Kālikāpurāṇa*, because they returned in every chapter. They often not only hampered a correct understanding of the text but also obscured the more colourful associations of the meditations and practices which are described in it, such as e.g. the almost apocalyptic implications of the meditation just mentioned, involving the dissolution of the five elements of which the human body is composed by generating the power of the sounds for wind, fire, earth and water. A microcosmical process parallels the macrocosmical periodic dissolution of the universe at the end of a world period.

3. Blood Sacrifice

One chapter in the published translation shows the ritual framework in which ritual violence was allowed as far as the *Kālikāpurāṇa* is concerned. Part of it is further elaborated in chapter 71=*69 which is the famous 'Sanguinary Chapter' mentioned at the beginning of this essay. In chapter 57=*55, 1-20 of the published translation, the rites of Mahāmāyā, called Mahāmāyākālpa, are concluded with 'gifts' (*dāna*) in the form of blood sacrifices, i.e. first of all animals, preferably buffaloes; secondly, flesh or blood from the worshipper's own body; and thirdly the sacrifice of a human being. The author of the *Kālikāpurāṇa* is using a Vedic term for this kind of sacrifice, viz. *balidāna*, which in a Vedic context denoted an oblation to the demons, either in the form of grains or rice, or in the form of animal sacrifice. It is significant that in the *Kālikāpurāṇa* the term is only used for blood sacrifice, either animal or human.

Although the *balidāna* concludes the ritual procedures, it would be wrong to imply that it constitutes an insignificant addition after the actual worship is over. In fact, this offering forms the most spectacular, and abhorrent, part of the whole ceremony, in which the account with

the deity is settled so to speak.

It is not my objective to go into details regarding this blood sacrifice. I would mainly draw attention to some rules and conditions by which these violent rites are regulated and permitted, and advance a few thoughts about the *kṣatriya* background of them.

In the chapter that was translated in 1972, the text makes mention of the kinds of animals that can be offered to Durgā. They all belong to the broad category of hunted animals and fall into the category of a usual oblation. If they are not available, the text says, one may use horses and elephants. The text continues by saying that if these are not available one may sacrifice a '*śarabha*', which is a non-existing mythological animal; this is called a 'great oblation'. Only then the sacrifice of a man is mentioned, which is 'an exceedingly great oblation' (57=*55, 3-6).

The special position of human sacrifice seems to be confirmed in chapter 71=*69, where it is said that a human being should never be sacrificed without permission of the king, and is only permitted in case of a public calamity or in times of war (71=*69, 115).

On the one hand, the ritual procedures and the accompanying *mantra*-s try to diminish the feeling that by performing a blood sacrifice an illegal act or even a crime is committed. The text of chapter 57=*55, 10-11 and of 71=*69, 39 quotes Manu's *Dharmaśāstra* for a justification of animal sacrifice: "for the sake of sacrifice Brahmā himself has created the animals; I shall put thee to death now; because of this, murder is no-murder in sacrifice".

On the other hand, heroism is called upon when the sword is being worshipped by *mantra*-s derived from a famous passage of the *Mahābhārata*. In this passage the figure of Kālarātrī is evoked, emerging in anthropomorphic form from the blood shed among the Pāṇḍava-s created by Aśvatthāman as an act of revenge. The justification of the blood sacrifice is sought in the great epic.

In a corresponding passage in 71=*69, 29-36 another Kālarātrī *mantra* makes perfectly clear what blood sacrifice is all about. After the usual corrections and emendations the text reads:

*hrīm hrīm kālī karāloṣṭhi sphem sphem phetkārīṇi khādayec
chedayet sarvān duṣṭān mārāya mārāya lulāyakaṇi khaḍgena
chindhi chindhi kila kila kici kici piba piba rudhiraṇi
sphaum sphaum kiri kiri kālīkāyai namaḥ |*

and the translation:

*hrīm hrīm O Kali whose lips are widely opened sphem sphem
phetkārīṇi, devour, destroy all evildoers, kill kill the buffalo by
means of the sword, cut off, cut off, kila kila kici kici drink drink
the blood, sphaum sphaum kiri kiri, honour to Kālīkā.*

Chapter 57=*55, 19-20 adds: "*om aiṃ hrīm śrīm*", Kauśikī must be

made swollen with blood". Chapter 71=*69, 37 declares: "After the sword has been consecrated with this *mantra*, Kālarātrī herself is so much pleased that she will cause the enemies to disappear".

If a man is sacrificed, his body is consecrated by perfumes and by *mantra*-s which are meant to make it divine, and he himself is promised a rebirth as a "king of the Gaṇas".

The offering of parts of one's own body is treated in 71=*69, 153-164. Small quantities seem to be sufficient: "One should never give more blood than a fourth part of the quantity which a lotus leaf can contain. The flesh to be offered is not more than the quantity of a bean, or a sesam-seed" (71=*69, 161-164).

The results are either negative because something went wrong or positive when the offering is accepted. It is significant that disasters and loss of the kingdom, or victory and prosperity are frequently mentioned. In 71=*69, 169-170 we read: "The worshipper who has taken the head of a man in his right hand and holds the vessel with blood in his left hand, and stands before the goddess for a night, this man will become a king here on earth, and after he has died he will reach Śiva's abode and become a ruler over the Gaṇas".

It is perfectly clear that the *Kālikāpurāṇa* is an important source for the study of ritual violence and cruelty. The conditions and precautions are meticulously spelled out. Blood sacrifice is regulated by the official authorities, worldly as well as religious, and even encouraged as an act of great devotion and merit.

Considering the data presented by the *Kālikāpurāṇa*, as far as the context of blood sacrifice is concerned, I see no reason why these blood offerings should be associated with Non-Aryan culture, or folk religion, as I suggested in the Introduction of 1972. On the contrary, I suspect that blood sacrifice was practiced to satisfy deities who functioned as the protectors of the king, the dynasty and the city, being the role the goddess Durgā had fulfilled in Hinduism from early times onwards.

In these surroundings some severe forms of violent behaviour are tolerated or even acclaimed, especially in times of war. The form this kind of violence has taken in the history of any city culture -- India is no exception of course -- or is taking on right now by the way, in particular when it is backed up by religious systems and values, should be examined closely, much in the same way as a dangerous disease. A comparative study of the rules of violence constitutes not a pleasant but an urgent task of scholarly research of the cultural sciences.

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Amaru, Erotic and Philosophical

by
Siegfried Lienhard

As it is the case with most Sanskrit poets, there are no statements on Amaru(ka) which might shed light on his person, life or activities.¹ Instead of reliable biographical data, there are, from early on, anecdotes and amusing legends, which of course could hardly be lacking in the case of this important lyrical poet writing on the subject of love. In some legends, Amaru is raised to the status of king. Legends about his encounter with Śaṅkara are especially well known. On the one hand, it is told that, due to his great yogic power, this great master of Advaita Vedānta took refuge in the body of Amaru to be able to answer questions on erotics, which were once put to Śaṅkara by the learned wife of the Mīmāṃsā philosopher Maṇḍana Miśra.² On the other hand, a number of mss. colophons represent the opinion that it may not have been Amaru himself but the philosopher Śaṅkara who, in the form of king Amaru, is supposed to have composed³ the verses in century which are contained in the *Amaruśataka*.

The following stanza, which can be interpreted in two ways, i.e. as having an erotic as well as a philosophical interpretation, could in fact stem from Śaṅkara as far as the contents of the second interpretation are concerned.

*prasāde sā diśi-diśi ca sā prṣṭhataḥ sā puraḥ sā
paryāṅke sā pathi-pathi ca sā tadviyogāturasya |
haṁho cetaḥ prakṛtir aparā nāsti me kāpi sā sā
sā sā sā jagati sakale ko 'yam advaitavādaḥ ||*

Though many readers may not count this poem written in *mandākrāntā* meter among the pinnacles of the AŚ, -- the double sense, mentioned just now, and some other details, which will be further elaborated below, make this poem especially attractive. A certain measure indicating its appreciation by indigenous literary critics may be that our stanza takes a special position, i.e. as the last of the ca. 102 stanzas in the recension of Arjunavarmadeva, the oldest commentator

¹ I thank Dr. Utz Podzeit, Reference Librarian for Indology of the University of Vienna, and Dr. Chlodwig H. Werba, Institute for Indology of the University of Vienna, for kind assistance in questions of library support and interpretations. [This paper was originally published in German in: WZKS 38 (1994), pp. 267-272; translation by M. Witzel].

² See H. von Glasenapp, *Die Philosophie der Inder*, Stuttgart 1949, p. 113.

³ Cf. S. Lienhard, *A History of Classical Poetry. Sanskrit-Pali-Prakrit*, Wiesbaden 1984, p. 93.

(13th cent.) of the AŚ.⁴

The ambivalence of the poem rests on four words: *tad*, *viyoga*, *prakṛti*, and *advaitavāda*. While the first three can be interpreted in a twofold way, the term *advaitavāda* points -- even in an erotical reading of the text -- very clearly to the domain of Vedānta and thus connects the erotic with the philosophical meaning of this stanza.

1. Erotic reading

Let us first regard the stanza as if it were in the first place a love poem. Read in that way, the text represents the monologue of a dejected lover separated from his beloved. The stanza is written in "first person style" which is not too frequently met with in Sanskrit *kāvya*. This is indicated immediately by *me* in the third line and by the key word for the interpretation of the stanza, the compound *tadvīyogāturasya*, which is correctly supplemented by *mama* in Arjunavarmadeva's commentary: "to me, the one taken ill due to the separation from her", i.e. "my beloved". My translation is free.

"In front, she, in the back, she, on the (roof gallery of the palace), everywhere, she!

She is on the bed, she is on every path!

O spirit, ill by separation from her, no other form in this world appears to me but her.

She, she, she, she, she, and (only) she! Is this becoming one?"⁵

The stanza is at first glance understood easily: consumed by longing,

⁴ On the recensions of the AŚ, see below, among others, S. Lienhard, *op. cit.*, p. 93, and the literature given, p. 92, n. 91, as well as D. Sagramoso Rossella (tr.), *Amaruka: Centuria d'amore (Śataka)*, Venezia 1989, pp. 34ff.

⁵ In my intentionally free translation, the section "(to me), ill by the separation from her (*tadvīyogāturasya*)" has been inserted at the beginning of the second half of the stanza for reasons of smoothness. An enjambement possibly can also be considered, but it is more likely that the compound *tadvīyogātura* is a complement of the first half of the stanza: "She (to me) is on the (roof terrace of the) palace, she is (to me) in front, she is (to me) behind, ... (to me who is) ill by the separation from her." Further, one could have translated the sixfold *sā* more accurately as "(it is) she, (it is) she, ..." [or as threefold "it is she" with the first, third and fifth *sā* as the subject of nominal clauses, the predicate noun of which is the second, fourth and sixth *sā* (Ch. H. Werba)]; -- this, too, would have been a translation which would have spoilt and diluted the translation. -- Recent translations of our stanza are found with D. Sagramoso Rosella, *op. cit.*, p. 82 and in L. Siegel's *Fires of Love - Waters of Peace, Passion and Renunciation in Indian Culture*, Honolulu 1983, p.11. Siegel, who describes Amaru and Śaṅkara in this book as the typical representatives of two antithetical ideals, but not as "actual figures who lived in the seventh or eighth century" (p. ix), presents, in my opinion an altogether too free, almost banal translation which in

the lover sees her (*sā*) everywhere; the word (*sā*) is repeated in the compound *tadvīyogātura* in the form of the ambivalent stem *tad*. The whole world appears to the love-sick as one pervaded by *prakṛti*, -- an equally well chosen word. It fits excellently in the string of comparisons which has been triggered by the evocation of Advaita teachings. While the Advaitin recognizes only *tad tvam asi*, the identity between *ātman* and *brahman*, in the manifoldness of the beings and things, our lover sees nothing but illusion (*māyā*) of the *nāyikā* who is present for him everywhere and who is taking on a new form for him everywhere. In my opinion, it is remarkable that the expression *prakṛti* used here has a not so incidental assonance with *ākṛti* 'the (beautiful) form (of the beloved woman).'

Some of the situations mentioned in the first part of the stanza, where the lover thinks he sees his beautiful beloved, can well be connected with certain *nāyikā* types. Thus, even the first word, *prāsāda*, not only evokes a noble house, a palace, but also its roof terrace, and the *proṣitabhartṛkā* 'one whose husband is travelling', a well liked topic of Indian miniature painting: from her roof terrace, she looks for the first signs of the rainy season, the clouds which promise the return of the beloved one. The phrases *diśi-diśi* 'in every direction, everywhere' and *pathi-pathi* 'on every path' make us think of the *nāyikā* as *abhisārikā*, who, as often depicted in painting, goes out on a lover's tryst at nightfall, -- while the locative *paryāñke* 'on the bed' evokes unambiguously the image of sexual union (*sambhoga*). The opposite, the unfulfilled and unlucky love indicated in the first line by *viyoga*, has been referred to several times above; it stands here *metri causa* for the otherwise frequent expression *viraha*. It should also be mentioned that the address to the organ of thought, here translated with 'spirit' contains a slight reproach: the organ of thinking (*cetas*, *citta*, or *manas*) coordinates the data supplied by the five senses of perception (eye, ear, nose, tongue and touch); but the one pronouncing this line thinks that his own thought carries out this work in a reproachable manner which confuses him completely.

An erotic connotation is to be admitted even for the philosophical term *advaita* which alludes, if the poem is read as a love poem, to the 'non-duality' in the sense of sexual union, desired by the lover. As has been mentioned earlier, the stanza is composed in *mandākrāntā* meter,

the last lines deviates very far from the original (p.11):

"She, she, she, she is right here, She, she, she, she is right there; She is far and yet near, She is everything and everywhere: Am I Amaru, the suffering lover, or Śaṅkara working undercover?" But he also provides (p. 112, n. 10) a literal translation which takes into account both possibilities for a translation of the stanza. On the other hand, the Italian translation by D. Sagramoso Rossella (*op. cit.*, p. 82) is excellent and true to the original, if without talking into account the second, philosophical meaning: "Lei nella casa, dovunque sempre lei, lei dietro le spalle, lei dinanzi, lei dentro il letto e in ogni strada, lei. Anima mia, straziato dall'averla lontana per me non esiste altra immagine. Lei lei lei lei lei in tutto il mondo c'è soltanto lei. Essere tutt'uno è questo?"

which ever since the *Meghadūta* has been a popular one for the depiction of unfulfilled love. Already the initial stanza of Kālidāsa's poem fixes the main theme by the use of the word (*kāntā*)*viraha*.

Though repetitions are strictly shunned in classical poetry, which always finds alternative expressions for the same thing,⁶ the emphatic 'she' (*sā*) which has been inserted twelve times altogether, is of special attraction and, therefore, has to be regarded as permitted by exception. In the first two quarters of the stanza [the word] "she" is distributed six times among the other words, and "she" also appears exactly six times in the second half of the stanza, which, summarizing the precedings "she'-s" produces six "she'-s" immediately following each other:

sā *vv*	*vvv*	*sā* - *v*	- *sā* *v*	- *sā*
sā *vv*	*vvv*	*sā* - *v*	-- *v*	- *v*
- *vv*	*vvv*	-- *v*	-- *v*	*sā* *sā*
sā *sā* *sa* | *sā* *v* *v* | *vvv* | -- *v* | -- *v* | -- ||

On the other hand, the circumstances under which the poetic ornament used is -- as Arjunavarmadeva notes -- the *viśeṣālaṃkāra*, can add but little to the reading enjoyment. According to the definitions of the poeticians, in one of the two forms of this figure of speech, one and the same thing or quality is present in different substrates or is connected with them. Examples in Sanskrit are given by Rudraṭa in his *Kāvyaśālaṃkāra* IX, 10 and in Arjunavarmadeva's commentary on AŚ 102; an example in Prakṛt is given by Mammaṭa on *Kāvyaaprakāśa* X, 136.⁷

2. Philosophical reading

Changing to another register in interpreting the words *tad*, *viyoga* and *prakṛti*, which had earlier been named as the main bearers of ambivalence, in their non-erotic second sense, the philosophical meaning of the stanza follows almost without effort. It can be translated in the following way:

"She is in front, in the back, she is in the temple,
 everywhere is she! She is on the bed, on every path!
 O spirit, confused by the separation of "this one"
 nothing other appears to me in this world but Prakṛti.
 She, she, she, she, (and only) she! -- Is this becoming one?"

In this reading, *tad*, is not, as has been mentioned above, a pronominal form for "she", i.e. the loved one, but designates *brahman*.

⁶ On the thorough avoidance of repetition(s) of words cf. S. Lienhard, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

⁷ See also E. Gerow, *A Glossary of Indian Figures of Speech*, The Hague-Paris 1971, pp. 269ff.

The word *prakṛti*, on the other hand, designates nature which has been formed in many shapes and figures. The one who pronounces this formula is not a lover but a seeker, someone striving for liberation, a *sādhū*.

Therefore, the word *vinīyoga*, which is, as is well known, very often used in a religious context as well, designates the distance of the *sādhū* from the original cause. Just as the beloved one appears to the lover everywhere, initially nothing presents itself to the one seeking release but the confusing manifoldness of *Māyā*, i.e. *Prakṛti*. It must also be mentioned that in a religio-philosophical interpretation of the stanza, the word *prasāda* indicates a temple, in the vicinity of which the *sādhū* stays, and that here *paryāṅka* means, of course, his simple bedstead.

It is common to both interpretations that the speaker of the reading in question -- the lover as well as the *sādhū* -- experiences the pain of paramount separation, while both strive for unity (*advaita*) with that which is designated by the word *tad*, i.e. the beloved one viz. *brahman*. In any case, I cannot think that Amaru (or whoever has composed this stanza) makes, as Siegel believes, a parody of Śaṅkara's philosophy and makes fun of certain hymns to the great Goddess attributed to Śaṅkara.⁸ Perhaps the poet simply wanted to be ambiguous. If the work of the composer, perhaps that of a poet later than Amaru, should fall in the period after Śaṅkara (8th cent.) certainly the legends mentioned above will have provided the starting point for this stanza, and it was the intention of the poet to present to his educated readers a poem composed in the sense of Amaru as well as that of Śaṅkara.

⁸ L. Siegel (*op. cit.*, p. 11) correctly explains: "For Śaṅkara separation is the fundamental illusion. The *sannyasi* is he who, feeling the pain of separation, seeks the blissful reality of union. The lover is no different."

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Wrapping Your Own Head.
Problems of Context and Individuality as Pre- and Post-
Considerations for Translating The Path of Ultimate Profundity,
The Great Seal Instructions of Zhang, a Twelfth-century Tibetan
Verse Compendium of Oral Instructions on Mahāmudrā

by
Dan Martin

"I was never one who let himself be led by the nose-ring"
Zhang Rinpoche

Individuality, as a complex of independence, self-assertion, personal initiative, originality and creativity, is a vexed question in Asian studies. There have been several publications during the last two decades on individuality (and 'agency') in South Asia, with some interesting arguments and insights, although we will not be discussing them here. Rather, we will approach the issue focussing on a particular person, our author Zhang Rinpoche, in his particular context. Definitions of "individuality" are plastic in the sense that their boundaries are often strategically adjusted in order to continue to include us, and exclude others. Among the best examples of this are definitions that insist on a component of egalitarianism. This is an excellent trick, to make an unrealized goal a necessary component of a definition. Then we go on to take other peoples', probably also unrealized, goals as the basis for contrast, in effect telling them, "Your ideals speak more loudly to us than your actions." It is a similar case with definitions of "nationalism". If any non-western group of the pre-colonial period is demonstrated to suit the existing definition, it is a simple matter to add a few more requirements for what "true" nationalism must be. Hence the relatively simple working definition of "individuality" we have given.

I want to stress at the outset that in the published version I did not comment on any general or obvious problems of translation, except to brush them off in a footnote. Now, after hearing and reflecting on a few comments from readers, I think certain problems of representing authorial style could have been addressed with some profit in the introduction; what I have to say today is a partial attempt to make up for my omissions.

I will begin by doing what I believe philology, in the old pregnant sense of the word, does best and look carefully and slowly (even if briefly) at a particular term in a particular context. In our author Zhang Rinpoche's work *Path of Ultimate Profundity*, the longest chapter, chapter eight, entitled "On Action", in a passage that he will soon characterize as 'heart talk' ('intimate conversation'), and in the context of his considerations on "non-meditation yoga", the fourth and highest of the four *yoga*-s of Mahāmudrā, he allows his formal, relatively technical, tone to break down into a colloquial style that is both personal

and specifically "Tibetan". He says,

In the non-meditation yoga, meditative equipoise
and post-meditation are both simply Dharma Body.
I do not have the mouth for a great deal of talk.
I do not have the mouth for swallowing dry *tsampa*.
Do not wrap up your own head.

Now, *tsampa* is the staple of traditional Tibetan diet, flour made from dry-roasted barley which is usually eaten only after being moistened and kneaded with hot buttered tea. To swallow it dry is an effective metaphor for being "all choked up" and unable to speak of the ultimate in yogic experience. My translation "Do not wrap up your own head" is overly conservative, and could have been rendered, "Don't engage in self-suffocating (i.e. self-defeating) behavior (by attempting to characterize the ultimate experience)".

By narrowing our focus to the single expression "own head" an elusive light angles in to modify our understanding a bit. 'Own head' is an essential ingredient in several colloquial expressions in use nowadays (we are uncertain about their histories, although they are not "modern", and one has been noted in an early nineteenth-century work of Gung-thang-pa which is a rare transcribed conversation in Amdo dialect). These expressions emphasize precisely individual initiative and self-power. Among these expressions, which are generally deployed with a strong sense of approval, are the following, in very-literal translated form: 'ability to stick out ones own head', 'to try to pull out ones own head' (meaning to take responsibility and go about solving things oneself), and 'to cover ones own head with ones own skin' (*rang mgo rang lpags-kyis 'thum-pa*). The last phrase, which uses a verb-form related to the [obsolete] verb-form used in Zhang's expression, is defined in a modern Tibetan-Tibetan dictionary as meaning, 'a metaphor for being able to support oneself with ones own resources without needing to turn to others'. The putting forward of ones own head is, of course, the conceptual near-opposite of another Tibetan phrase, *mgo gnon-pa*, which means literally 'pressing down the head', but in usage means 'suppressing or oppressing'. Perhaps not needless to say, the Tibetan words for 'head', like the English word, are commonly used to mean 'leadership' and so forth. After such careful considerations, we might be tempted to translate the line from Zhang's work as 'Don't smother your own independence', implying in the context, perhaps ironically, that the ultimate experience is something that requires individual confirmation and expression. A fuller study of these expressions in their historical dimensions will have to wait, but meanwhile I will just stick out my head and say that on the popular, informal level, individual initiative and resourcefulness have been positively evaluated and encouraged by Tibetans.

We should note here also other expressions for independence. *Rang-*

rkya or *rang-skya* means independence in the sense of being able to stand on one's own two feet. *Rang-dbang* and *rang-btsan* are words used by Tibetan nationalists, often rendered 'self-determination'. There is also, nowadays, the relatively innocuous expression *rang-skyong*, 'self-governance' or 'autonomy' which occurs in the official name "Tibetan Autonomous Region" or T.A.R. All these words begin with the syllable *rang*, which is used to form reflexive (often self-referential) expressions. Note also *rang-bzo*, used as both adjective and noun, and always in negative light, to mean most literally, 'of one's own manufacture or creation' (which might be translated '[simply] made up').

Zhang Rinpoche, in both his life and his writings, was clearly one who very often stuck his own head out, and this is reflected both in his life as told in his autobiography, a near-contemporaneous biography, and in his literary style. I had read Zhang's *Path* about ten years before I returned to it and found the courage to begin to translate it. Meanwhile I read a lot in eleventh- to twelfth-century literature of all sects: the Bonpo, Nyingmapa, Kadampa, and Sakyapa, as well as Zhang's Kagyupa sect. What I came to find was not a uniformity of approach and thought, but rather differing approaches to Buddhism that had a great deal of trouble approaching each other. These different perspectives gradually crystallized in my mind as four distinct "types" of Buddhists which cannot be simply reduced to sectarian perspectives. Each "type" starts with a view on what constitutes the main thing in which one ought to immediately engage. Those who advocate first and foremost devotion, I call "devotion-based" Buddhists. If scholastic learning is foregrounded, I call it "learning-based". If deliberate cultivation of compassion is asserted to be the main thing, I call it "cultivation-based". Those who first and foremost advocate meditation, I would call "meditation-based".

Taking the middle decades of the twelfth century as the basis, I could point to Phya-pa Chos-kyi-seng-ge as an ideal proponent of the "learning-based" approach, to 'Chad-kha-ba (author of the single most-frequently translated Tibetan composition, *Seven-point Mind Training*) as a proponent of "cultivation-based" Buddhism, and for an exemplary proponent of "meditation-based" Buddhism, I can point to no better example than Zhang Rinpoche himself, although generally speaking he is in this quite true to his Kagyupa predecessors. I would like to spend some time illustrating with several quotes the early Kagyupa emphasis on the primacy of meditation.

In the *Responses to Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa*,¹ Sgam-po-pa carefully distances his approach from that of the learning-based Buddhists,

Generally speaking, there are two styles at work in religion. These two are the 'philosophical', which is effective for knowing/perceiving, and the 'realizational' which is effective for

¹ Pp. 124-125. Some of the following quotations have already appeared in Martin D. (see **Bibliography**).

attainment. The activities of learning and pondering in themselves constitute a method, but this must not turn into a method for facilitating afflictive emotions. This would be to cut off the goal of knowing, and at bottom it is of no help... One needs to forget all the technical terms of the treatises. Those whose learning is extensive are acute in words, but obtuse in meanings. Their talents turn into faults.

We need to be precise about the sort of understanding that Sgam-po-pa and Zhang Rinpoche discount as insufficient. It is, first of all, textual understanding -- texts being the "societies of words" (*tshig tshogs*, which in the published translation I translated 'clumps of words') pursued for their own sake without reference to any meaning outside themselves, but rather viewed exclusively along the lines of the internal interrelationships of the terms and categories. Zhang Rinpoche's *Path of Ultimate Profundity* says,

Uttering societies of words such as these does not touch on it.
Societies of words, however acute and profound,
have been pronounced in many accounts,
but are incapable of touching the real condition of mind.

Naturally, Zhang acknowledges his own text to be a "society of words",

Do not mull over these expressions of mine.
Understand they are like the finger that points out the moon.
Knowing this, the societies of conventional words
won't get in the way, won't veil understanding with verbal faults.
So, without giving up words and investigations,
take pride in the meaning and don't get attached.

He is not opposed to study -- he has some good words for learning -- only to philological fixations that end up in a pride (intellectual mastery or authority as an end in itself) that obstructs further comprehensions. Notice the good words he has to say for learning found near the end of the *Path of Ultimate Profundity*,

Religious people in these bad times of the present
have little of the inner discipline that comes from study.
Even those who are learned in societies of words
have not realized their significances.
In the future, their proud contentions will increase.
The revered Lamas of the accomplishment transmission
pursued meanings and became accomplished.
Permanently renouncing such things as pride,
understanding meanings was the only skill
in scriptural authority and reasoning they required.

In short, neither verbal expression (philology) nor mental investigation (philosophical theorizing, etc.), nor even scriptural exegesis, touch on the real condition. They fall short of the mark. He says,

While falling short of the mark does not mean an end to development,
following what has not entered deep within will give rise to dis-ease.
Those contemplators who have mastered mind-made philosophies
will be invaded by the chronic disease of partiality.

According to the Mahāmudrā tradition of the early Kagyupa, the unfoldment of the meditative life culminates in the realization of the actual condition of mind, which is in itself sufficient. They prefer the meditative to the phenomenological approach, since the ***objective*** "phenomenological" Dharma Proper (*Chos-nyid*) is taken care of by the meditative realization of ***subjective*** Mind Proper (*Sems-nyid*). Phag-mo-gru-pa, as cited in a work by his student 'Jig-rten-mgon-po,² said:

The learned scholars cut away the veils [of words] with words and establish the objects of knowing... Make forests into pens, oceans into ink, land into paper, and still there would be no end to their writing. Yogins do not establish external objectivities; they establish the mind. The mind established, its objects establish themselves.

Sgam-po-pa says,³ in answer to a question about whether the Great Seal teachings differentiate Dharma Proper and Mind Proper,

They are the same. The light of mind is Dharma Proper, so through realization of Mind Proper, Dharma Proper realization is taken care of [*or*, loosens its own bonds] ... Meditating exclusively on the substance of mind is sufficient.

Other Buddhists (meaning especially Sa-skya Pandi-ta in the early 13th century, but also some earlier dialecticians of Gsang-phu Ne'u-thog Monastery) would take issue with this idea of the self-sufficiency of meditation, but I doubt that any would deny its importance. Again, this is a matter of priorities, of what ought to be done first.

While Zhang Rinpoche was, in this rather "radical" view, apparently only a follower of his own tradition, perhaps even, we could say, "determined by his context", when we turn to works in his literary corpus, we find strong testimony of his literary and intellectual

² *Works*, vol. 4, p. 408.

³ *Responses to Phag-mo-gru-pa*, p. 51.

"originality", particularly in his autobiographical writings.

Now just the word 'autobiography' ought to set certain trains of thought to work. I don't have time to go into any of the problematic of autobiography in **this** context, but I would like to refer those interested to a recent, very thoughtful treatment of the Tibetan autobiographical genre by Prof. Janet Gyatso, now teaching at Amherst. While autobiographies as sources for historical and other insights are a problem for us, they also present problems for those who write them. In the opening words of Zhang's main autobiography entitled *Sher-grub-ma*, composed in 1166, we find the following apology.

Generally, to tell one's own life story oneself is against tradition. It is not the proper thing to do. It is not in keeping with the Dharma. One may see how certain worthy scholars such as noble Nāgārjuna, out of consideration either for a few of their disciples or for people in general, composed many words about their distant childhoods. Nevertheless, I have not told my own biography in order to brag. My students must repeat the truth, and since there is an endless array of types of persons, if this biography brings benefit to just a few of them, those benefits will not be brought to an end until the end of becoming. Therefore, if it is shown to others, aside from those few whose thoughts have imposed upon me an image of perfection, it will surely result only in criticism and condemnation. This will contaminate your own mental stream and, having accumulated the gravest of sins, you will cause your own descent into the hells. Hence the great importance of not showing this to others. It is my feeling that there is probably no harm in telling it with the hope of benefitting the very few.

It is intriguing to consider how, after saying that autobiography-writing is not the thing to do and citing a dubious precedent (Janet Gyatso doesn't find any connected autobiographies by Indian Buddhists), Zhang nevertheless goes on to write at length the story of his life. Ironically, while written as he says for "those whose thoughts have imposed on me an image of perfection", the autobiography itself is full of confessions of his imperfections. To give an example from his childhood,

Despite my great faith, I took minnows from the freshwater spring, killed, and ate them. I even swallowed a live one whole. I cut off the rear of a meat fly, stuck a flower in its place, and sent it flying. I think that the fact that I am now poor and my good looks are not obvious is as a karmic result of these deeds. My faith and my faults formed sides, and many were the occasions when they contradicted each other.

Later on, as a mature young man, he several times resorted to goat

sacrifices in order to work evil spells against his enemies, even once *after* he had taken the vows of a Buddhist lay person. The *Rgyal-blon-ma*,⁴ written by his student, says that he successfully performed magic, with no reference to goat slaying. This is but one of several places where the *Rgyal-blon-ma* is reticent about details that could place the teacher in a bad light. The point is that Zhang Rinpoche is not so reticent.

If we look at his record of his early education, his mother, who had been a nun before she married, encouraged his studies. Already at the age of five, he was giving short religious discourses and recitations in front of the assembly of nuns with whom his mother continued her association. He was exposed, as a young teenager, to some classics of Madhyamaka and other Buddhist philosophies, but he was not widely read in this area, and unlike many of his contemporaries he studied little if any Sanskrit. He says, "I studied much of the *Abhidharma* with the teacher Sam-bu Lo-tsā-ba, as well as the *Pramāṇavārtika*, the *Five Paths*, the *Sūtrālamkāra* and other texts. I did not understand them."

In about 1148, in a depressed state of mind that bordered on the suicidal, he took monastic vows, and spent most of the following eighteen years until his composition of the *Path of Ultimate Profundity* in solitary or nearly-solitary meditation retreats in mountain caves and hermitages.

We have already seen some evidence for Zhang's assessment of the value of verbalizations. In the *Sher-grub-ma*, he several times displays his impatience with other people's verbalizations. About one retreat which he had to share with several other meditators, he said,

Their chatter and conversation had nothing in common with their deeper intentions... I did not see a single one who recognized their own faults. I did not see even one who looked upon their faults as faults and tried to do something about them. If I told them, 'I noticed such and such a thing,' they would say, 'How can that possibly be true?' and go on accumulating sin....I had many such 'elders' for companions. When one of them would act so as not to lose reputation, they would become ugly to me.

From his teenage years, he viewed ritual proprieties in a similar light. According to the *Rgyal-blon-ma* biography written soon after his death, he believed that receiving or not receiving ritual initiations was not in itself important (a view he had also expressed in the *Path of Ultimate Profundity*). Then he witnessed a *dhāraṇ* ritual performed by a nun without regard for the ritual directions, which was nevertheless successful in healing the sick client. Later, in his twenties in Khams, he did thread-cross and fire rituals "from memory", without instruction as to the proper procedures, which nonetheless were efficacious. These experiences convinced him that, in general, regardless of how the rituals

⁴ p. 225.

are carried out, the "words of truth" are what really make them work.

"Words of truth" will be a concept familiar to Indologists, but here I believe Zhang intends a 'true declaration of heart-felt intention'. This lack of confidence in the formal structures of initiatic and other rituals, while it does occur, is not at all usual among Tibetan monks, who lay great store in precedence. The usual attitude is that if one follows the directions laid down in the texts by past masters it will be sufficient to achieve the desired result.

In both ritual action and verbalization, however, Zhang is not an anarchist. He does respect the past, and particularly the past of his own tradition. But he does at the same time leave open the possibility for direct and even unprecedented expressiveness in word and deed. By just looking at the forms and genres of his literary output, we may demonstrate that Zhang put these attitudes into practice. He not only composed several autobiographical works, he was probably the first Tibetan to do so at any length. He wrote in unorthodox verse forms, such as this sample in a highly unusual metre which I have tried to reproduce, from a piece entitled *Twelve and a Half Crippled Verses* (what follows is only partial).

Directions: known.

Business: given up.

Retreat: staying.

Put into practice. Astounding!

Staying alone.

Devoted to meditation.

Anxieties: few.

Preserving experiences. Astounding!

Relaxed and unwound.

Immovably settled in meditation.

Dharma Body seen. Astounding!

Nothing to meditate.

Made a habit.

Become real.

Meditation and postmeditation the same. Astounding!

Beggar-monk Zhang.

Directions: skilled.

Distracting doubts: cut off.

Words: abundant harvest. Astounding!

Besides autobiographies, other genres that Zhang Rinpoche initiated, at least in an incipient form, are the genres of Gsan-yig, 'Records of Things Learned', and the Bca'-yig, 'Monastic Constitutions'. After his

death, some of his disciples compiled the first Bka'-rgya-ma collection of *Sealed Writings* based on a set of eight visionary autobiographies. Later Tibetan writers such as the Fifth Dalai Lama followed Zhang in producing "sealed" works in a body of texts kept apart from their *Collected Works*. Zhang's *Sealed Writings* show him to be the center of a ritualized Guruyoga cult, making him probably the first **Tibetan** teacher to be so honored.

If we leave for a moment the realm of literature for that of politics, Zhang Rinpoche would, just a few years after his composition of the *Path*, become the first to form a non-royal, religious sectarian polity in central Tibet, thus arguably setting the precedent for later Sakya, Kagyupa and Gelugpa sectarian rule, although this has not been sufficiently recognized in the existing political histories. He was probably also the first to institute the office of "sgom-chen" (a title with the apparently incongruous literal meaning 'great meditator', who would, in the Sakya sect, be called "dpon-chen", 'great chief') to whom were delegated the secular and military affairs of the sect. We can show that the essential political setup behind what was in his time called the "Patron-Priest relationship" and also what would later (probably in the fifteenth century) be called the Pairing of Religious and Secular Rule, was already in place in Zhang's pre-Mongol times. Zhang Rinpoche did come in for considerable criticism, though, for directly involving himself in policing actions against areas that did not agree to his rule. The volume of his *Selected Works* contains the only copy of a set of extremely vituperative verses (entitled *Phyag-khri-mchog-ma*) aimed his way by one Phyag-khri-mchog. One can perceive Zhang's unquenchably individualistic character even through the obvious rancor. Phyag-khri-mchog says,

To mislead the faithful you have your own interpretive devices,
resorting to the scriptures with scant knowledge of the words,
but then pretentious about the meanings, contemptuous of the
methods.

Shame on you, you fine-speaking scholar,
because the words have nothing to do with your meanings...

Beggar-monk Zhang, what haven't you done?
When you first started meditating you practiced renunciation,
but in your old age you had to give that up to make a living
and openly sought to create wealth, estates, and so on.

...

By buying and selling, field work and agriculture, battles and
various other means you seek a shelter for your old age.
You are certainly deeply misguided
and these battles on the empty fields and meadows

have brought all sorts of grief to countless living things:
to worms, lizards, mice, ants and so forth.
For a religious person, doing such sinful deeds, shame on you.

Scripture, reason and precepts of the Lama all
say to give up worldly business.
You conduct business even more than a householder.
You need everything and use everything;
all kinds of things you need.
Contemplative with so many needs and necessities, shame on you.

The biography of your sinful deeds is impossible to encompass.
You sit on your triple-stacked cushions wearing all the finest
clothes.
Astride your fine horse, you are like a goat reaching out to snatch
his food.
To crowds of people you tell all manner of nice stories.
While speaking seeming truths you commit all kinds of sins.
What person is there who has not been deceived by you?

Contemplative who moves his battlefield with him,
plundering all he needs -- horses, armor, scriptures, and so on.
You gather men, weapons and armor for your army.
Constantly, day and night, you engage in the preparations for war.
Besides you what contemplative plays the battle-lord?

Zhang Rinpoche's humorously self-defacing reply has also been preserved in a work called *Astonished Verses of Praise to Myself* (and also, *Re-po-skyid-ma*) in which he plays loosely with the conventions of the Buddhist *stotra* genre. I have translated the term *rdol chos*, or 'outbreak Dharma', as 'pop religion', this being the oldest datable use of this term to my knowledge. It would be widely used in the early thirteenth century to refer to religious teachings without any past lineage or background that simply 'pop up', and more specifically to certain popular religious movements of the eleventh through twelfth centuries that were rejected by the official establishments of their day, and have since been neglected in histories by both Tibetans and non-Tibetans. Bear in mind that Zhang Rinpoche is addressing the following words **to himself**.

Sometimes you sing, sometimes you dance, and sometimes you
moan.
You joke, get angry, laugh, and cry.
You do all kinds of things, without restraint.
Passionate madman, to you I will not prostrate.

The way you arrange the robes around you without fastening
them,

such bad and shameless actions you do.
 All kinds of things come out of your mouth,
 spouting nothing but pop religion.
 Shifty eyes, to you I will not prostrate.

I will not leave you to pull the Buddha's teachings down.
 Where is it taught that monks should dance and sing?
 Whose tradition is it to open ones mouth with nothing to say?
 Whose tradition is it to act without reserve on ones desires?
 Is that the religious tradition of renunciates?
 Surely none of the scriptures, treatises and precepts,
 none of the utterances of holy Lamas
 have taught to do what you have done.
 Who gave you the teachings of the Buddha so you could pull them
 down?
 Who entrusted you with perverting the faith of other people?
 Who gave you the right to place your followers in sin?
 Who entrusted your wicked self with governing others?
 To you who have done so much that was not entrusted to you --
 my mind is always sick of you -- I will not prostrate.

To you who have pulled the teachings down
 I will not prostrate.
 Misguided guru, to you I will not prostrate.
 Course acting monk, to you I will not prostrate.
 Poisonous tree, to you I will not prostrate.
 Pure without, dirty within, to you I will not prostrate.
 Disgrace to religious people, to you I will not prostrate.
 In all future rebirths may I never meet with you.
 By censuring just a few drops of water
 from the oceanic flood of your faults,
 may your example not be followed by other beings
 and may I, after leaving you, be with you never more.

Both Phyag-khri-mchog's verses and Zhang's "autobiographical" response cast Zhang's eccentricities and other personal excesses in a highly negative light. But then, given the circumstances, it is clear that Zhang was able to give as good as he got. He is able to turn an attack on his character into what amounts to a very Buddhist attack on the self itself. And he is able to accomplish this in a very outspoken, individual, and creative manner.

Given our time limitations, I would have liked to include here a discussion, with some illustrative quotations, that would address "our" problems with Zhang's meditation advocacy. Shouldn't a life devoted to meditation remain quietistic and passive, and don't meditators have to resign themselves to the status of perpetually uninvolved victims of their social context?

A categorization of Zhang as meditation advocate must be cognizant of the fact that, even in his characterizations of the different phases of meditation, he places equal emphasis on the quality of post-meditational experience of the world. And this balance is explicitly paralleled (toward the end of his chapter "On Action") by his use of the paired concepts 'socializing and seclusion', 'social and individual' 'public and private'. Finally, Zhang says, for the person who has reached the ultimate realization of Mahāmudrā, the difference between meditative equipoise and post-meditation, as well as the difference between the social and individual, make no difference.

Herein lies the intriguing character of Zhang. He invokes the individualistic concept of "own head" in the context of the **ultimate** yogic experience of reality where individualism, by his own account, would dissolve. He writes autobiographies, and in them he writes critical accounts of himself. He writes devastatingly satirical verses about himself, verses that nonetheless affirm his Buddhist outlook based on non-self. It isn't just that "individuality", in so far as it is not just a cultural ideal and corresponds to something in actual experience, may be little more than the struggle of our context against our recalcitrant wills; it's the degree of Zhang's recalcitrance, even to the point of battling those who opposed his will, that is remarkable.

In short, it would be to slight his spirit and creativity to translate Zhang's poetry in the monotonous drones of what is now often called "Buddhist Hybrid English". It would equally be a slighting of his work to dub it a "text" in a post-modernist sense that would preclude the possibility of any genuine or direct heartfelt expression. Expressing afresh a living experience, even of the most mundane everyday sort, is so difficult that we often stumble over the words, blurting out things that, given our understanding of our context, might be an embarrassment. But if we deny a hearty individual like Zhang the real possibility for individual expression, we'll have to deny it to ourselves.

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PRIMARY TEXT: Zhang G.yu-brag-pa Brtson-'grus-grags-pa, *Phyag-rgya-chen-po Lam Zab Mthar-thug Zhang-gi Man-ngag*, contained in *Rtsib-ri Spar-ma*, Vol. 4, pp. 49-117 (i.e., 35 folio pages).

TEXT G: same work, but with variant title, *Skye-med Zhang Rin-po-ches Mdzad-pa'i Phyag-rgya-chen-po'i Lam Mchog Mthar-thug*, contained in *Gdams-ngag Mdzod: A Treasury of Instructions and Techniques for*

Spiritual Realization, compiled by 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul Blo-gros-mtha'-yas, reproduced from a xylographic print from the Dpal-spungs blocks, Delhi, N. Lungtok & N. Gyaltsan, 1971, Vol. 5, pp. 744-777 (i.e., 17 folio pages).

TEXT H: same title as Text G, contained in *Gdams-ngag Mdzod: A Treasury of Precious Methods and Instructions of the Major and Minor Buddhist Traditions of Tibet*, brought together and structured into a coherent system by 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul, edited from a set of the Dpal-spungs prints and published at the order of H.H. Dingo Chhentse Rimpoche, Paro, Lama Ngodrup & Sherab Drimey, 1979, Vol. 8, pp. 429-462 (i.e., 17 folio pages).

TEXT N: Nepalese National Archives. Reel no. E1818/4 ('running number' E34769): *Phyag-rgya-chen-po Lam Zab Mthar-thug Zhang-gi Man-ngag*, 35 folio xylograph. Filmed 12/5/85. Edges damaged slightly by fire. 8.5 X 40 cm. Microfilm based on blockprint in possession of Am-chi Rdo-rje-grags-pa, Bodhanath, Nepal. Printed from same woodblocks as our primary text, but with 33 variant readings, nevertheless.

Phyag-khri-mchog-ma: See Zhang, *Works*, pp. 661-665. (Be aware that the actual title occurs, by mistake, on p. 659)

Responses to Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa (*Dus-mkhyen Zhus-lan*), in *Rtsib-ri Par-ma*, Vol. 5, pp. 71-241.

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1972. (Note that this volume is the only large body of Zhang's works available at present, although the complete six-volume set, along with a few partial sets, recently located in Nepal, is on microfilm at the Nepalese National Archives, Kathmandu)



Afterthoughts on a French Translation of the *Yoginīhṛdaya* with Amṛtānanda's *Dīpikā*¹

by
André Padoux

"Le sens n'est que possibilité de transcodage"
J. Greimas

The *Yoginīhṛdaya* (YH), a Sanskrit work in verse, is one of the main texts on the cult of the goddess Tripurasundarī. This cult is usually considered as constituting one of the five "transmissions" (*āmnāya*) of the vast Tantric Kula (or Kaula) tradition, namely the *dakṣiṇāmnāya*, the "Southern Transmission". This transmission is sometimes also called Śrīvidyā, which is the name of the *mantra* of Tripurasundarī who, further, is always worshipped on (and as) the *śrīcakra*, a diagram of nine concentric circuits. It is mainly a tradition of erotic magic, Tripurasundarī being worshipped as the goddess of erotic love, Kāmeśvarī, together with her male consort Kāmeśvara. It is a mild but nevertheless characteristically tantric tradition. It still exists in some parts of India.² A "Vedantized" and largely "de-Tantrified" version of it is still active in south India where it was adopted by the Śaṅkarācāryas of Śṛṅgeri and Kāñcīpuram who (quite implausibly) ascribe its origin to the 8th century philosopher Śaṅkara.

The YH seems to be one of the more recent among the older *kaula* texts. It may date from the 11th (or perhaps the 12th) century, since some passages seem to show an influence from the Pratyabhijñā. Amṛtānanda's (Amṛt) Sanskrit commentary on it, the *Dīpikā* (Dī), which I have also translated, is apparently the first commentary on that text. As I have shown in the introduction to that translation, it is likely to date from the 14th century, and it probably originates from south India. Its doctrine is very much influenced by that of the Pratyabhijñā as it was expounded by Kṣemarāja (11th c.). The YH is interesting in that, together with its (probably slightly earlier) parent text, the *Nityāśoḍaśikāṇḍa* (or *Vāmakeśvarīmata*), it appears as a basic work of the Tripurā tradition. Earlier works of that tradition may have existed since some are quoted by Jayaratha (13th c.) in his commentary of the *Vāmakeśvarīmata*, but they have not come down to us.

Though Amṛt is in all likelihood a Southerner, the YH itself as well as

¹ *Le cœur de la Yoginī. Yoginīhṛdaya avec le commentaire Dīpikā d'Amṛtānanda*, Texte sanskrit traduit et annoté par André Padoux. Paris, Collège de France, 1994 (Publications de l'Institut de Civilisation Indienne, fasc. 63).

² The chapter "Tantric sādhanā: pūjā" by S. Gupta on the Tantric cult in S. Gupta, D. J. Hoens, T. Goudriaan, *Hindu Tantrism*, Leiden, Brill, 1979, describes the cult of Tripurasundarī as practised in northern India.

the *Vāmakeśvarīmata* are, I believe, part of a Kashmirian (or more generally Northern) scriptural tradition, and not of a Southern one influenced by the Kashmirian theological and exegetical system, as Alexis Sanderson believes.³ I may, however, be wrong. But whatever its geographical origin, the *YH* was soon known almost everywhere in the subcontinent: the large number of manuscripts of this work that are still found (notably in south Indian scripts) in libraries or in private ownership all over India and in Nepal testifies to its widespread popularity.

The text of the *YH* looks fairly well established since there appears to be only minor variants among most of the manuscripts the editor of this work has used (and the few I have seen). There does not seem to exist any ancient manuscript which could show an early and perhaps somewhat different text of the *YH*. The fact that Amṛt's *Dī* quotes and comments the text as it has come down to us can be taken as confirming the validity (or at least the stability since the 14th century) of the text I have translated.

The *YH* is a comparatively short work: 375 *śloka*-s in the edition I have used, divided into three chapters of respectively 86, 85 and 104 stanzas. It was first edited, together with the *Dī*, by Gopinath Kaviraj and published in the *Sarasvatī Bhavana Granthamālā* (Vol. 7) in 1923. This edition was very defective (it is however still being reprinted). It was succeeded by that of Vrajvallabha Dvivedi, published in Delhi in 1988,⁴ an edition based on eight manuscripts chosen after studying and comparing some thirty different ones from various libraries in India and Nepal. This is a much better edition, though not a perfect one. The critical acumen, and consequently the choice among the variant readings by the learned pandit who edited it, are not those of an academically trained scholar. Though I did sometimes disagree with V. V. Dvivedi's readings and selected others, it is however his edition I used for my translation. One can (and some will surely) reproach me for not having myself edited this work, or at least attempted to correct systematically Dvivedi's edition, which I well might have done. I however chose not to do so. This not merely out of laziness, but mainly because my main concern was not philological, textual, but ritual, theological, metaphysical. I translated the *YH* (and the *Dī*) to make known a work not hitherto translated in a Western language to all those -- mainly but not necessarily Indologists -- who may be interested by metaphysical and theological speculations as well as by the ritual practices of a particular form of Tantric Hinduism, and this, I believe, can be validly done even

³ See A. Sanderson, "Śaivism and the Tantric Tradition", in S. Sutherland *et al.* eds., *The World's Religions*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1988, pp. 660-704.

⁴ *Yoginīhrdayam amṛtānandayogikṛtadīpikayā bhāṣānuvādena ca sahitaṃ*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1988.

while using for one's translation a generally good edition even if it is not a totally satisfactory one.⁵

I should add that the translation of any text, but especially of such works as the *YH* and the *Dī* -- a few hundred concise stanzas with a painstaking commentary of the traditional type purporting to elucidate them grammatically, ritually and symbolically -- necessarily entails a certain amount of interpretation. For this, I had to keep always in mind the ideological and ritual background of the work, that is, a number of notions proper to the Kashmirian brand of non-dualist Śivaism, and more specifically to Kṣemarāja's version of the Pratyabhijñā, so as not to misunderstand or misinterpret its less obvious passages.

This is not to say that I disregarded philological accuracy, or neglected the grammatical meaning of any sentence. Quite the contrary. To quote Louis Renou: "adhérer à la pensée indienne, c'est d'abord penser en grammairien". This I tried never to forget. The precept is to be kept in mind particularly when dealing with philosophic and/or commentarial works in Sanskrit, where not rarely the reasoning is based explicitly or implicitly on grammar: this happens frequently in the *Dī*. I could quote here as an example the very first sentences of the *Dī*, where, commenting on the opening words of the *YH*, *śrīdevī uvāca*, "the Goddess said", Amṛt explains that the use of the perfect tense (*liṭ*) of the verb is due to (and shows) the eternal character of what is being said in the *Tantra*. The dialogue between the Goddess and Bhairava which is constitutive of the *YH* is not a fact of present time, something which we can see. It is timeless, invisible (*parokṣa*). The very grammar of the sentence, where the verb is in a tense used for things one cannot have seen, shows the divine, eternal nature of the revelation uttered by the godhead. A revelation, further, that Amṛt goes on describing as coming down to mankind through the cosmic process of the Word, from *parāvāc*, through *paśyantī*, and *madhyamā* to *vaikhari*, that is, through the fourfold system of (timeless) phonic manifestation developed by Tantric schools on the basis of the threefold system expounded by the 5th century grammarian-philosopher Bhartrhari.

Of course, any text and not only a Sanskrit one, refers us both to what it says and to how it says it: to its linguistic and phonetic structure, that is. As a literary critic once said: "whatever else I may be talking about, I am also talking about language".⁶ This was not said about Sanskrit but about literature, poetry especially. It is nevertheless not irrelevant in the present case where we have to transpose what the Sanskrit text expresses

⁵ Not of course an extremely faulty and sometimes incomprehensible text as, for instance, Gopinath Kaviraj's edition.

⁶ J. Thompson, in a conference on poetics, Warsaw 1984. See also R. Barthes, "Le discours de l'écrivain dit ce qu'il dit mais aussi qu'il est littérature", Avertissement of the paperback reprint of *Le degré zéro de l'écriture*, Paris, Denoël/Gonthier, 1965.

or develops according to the rules of the Sanskrit grammar into the completely different structure of French. Can we really transpose without a loss or an alteration of meaning? One may have doubts on that point. Hinduism, as is often said nowadays, should be understood through Hindu categories,⁷ but we cannot write about these categories except by using those of our own language.

Supposing the transposition from the Sanskrit linguistic code to the French one to be possible without too much loss of meaning or without too great a discrepancy between what the original says and what the translation conveys (since what is to be transferred is the meaning: to quote Greimas: "le sens n'est que possibilité de transcodage") it is made all the more difficult in practice by the often widely different "areas of meaning" (*sprachliche Felder*, to use Trier's vocabulary)⁸ between Sanskrit and French words, those areas being determined by two entirely different cultures. I need not mention the Sanskrit words nobody translates (*brahman*, *ātman*, *tattva*...). But I did not translate *cakra*, nor *bindu*, nor *liṅga*, etc. You cannot translate *bhāvanā* by meditation since this mental and spiritual practice and experience (to which Amṛt refers continually) is much more than a mere meditation. Nor can you translate *kalā* by part or portion since *kalā* is also (and can denote at the same time) a deity, a plane of the cosmos, an energy, etc. A number of such cases could be quoted. In such instances the less unsatisfactory solution is probably not to translate, and then try and explain the particular meaning or meanings of the term in notes or in a glossary. To leave Sanskrit words untranslated, however, is both inconvenient for the reader who does know the meaning(s) of the Sanskrit terms and aesthetically unpleasant: a page bristling with italicised Sanskrit words is not pleasant to look at.

Neither should a translation be so near to the text and/or so "sanskriticised" in sentence structure and terms that those only who know Sanskrit (and therefore do not need a translation) can understand it. There is a risk there, which one finds lurking, for instance, in the otherwise excellent, erudite and very informative pages of Pierre-Sylvain Filliozat's appendix, "Le commentaire sanskrit" to his *Grammaire sanskrite paninéenne*.⁹ A defect sometimes to be found in the best known and most "classical" translations from the Sanskrit.¹⁰

Concerning more specifically the translation of Sanskrit

⁷ See McKim Marriott (ed.), *India Trough Hindu Categories*, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 1990.

⁸ "Das sprachliche Feld", in *Neue Jahrbücher für Wissenschaft und Bildung*, 10 (1934), pp. 428-449.

⁹ P.-S. Filliozat, *Grammaire sanscrite paninéenne*, Paris, Picard, 1988.

¹⁰ *The Yoga-System of Patañjali*, translated by J. H. Woods, for instance, where the translation of all Sanskrit terms contributes to the obscurity of the English text.

commentaries, I would be tempted to say that the translator should not hesitate to interpret while translating so as better to convey its expressed or implicit meaning: all that the text both says and implies or alludes to. The role of a translation would thus be somehow comparable to that of a commentary, which, to quote Michel Foucault, "interroge le discours sur ce qu'il dit et a voulu dire; il cherche à faire surgir ce double fond de la parole, où elle se retrouve en une identité à elle-même qu'on suppose plus proche de sa vérité; il s'agit, en énonçant ce qui a été dit, de redire ce qui n'a jamais été prononcé...: commenter, c'est admettre par définition un excès du signifié sur le signifiant, un reste nécessairement non formulé de la pensée que le langage a laissé dans l'ombre...".¹¹

However, though I commend this approach, I did not try to follow it. On the contrary, I tried to keep as near as possible to the Sanskrit text. The sometimes elaborate and usually cryptic style of the *YH* I surely could have transposed less literally, more elegantly, into French. As for the *Dī*, I all too often tried to keep near to the Sanskrit sentence for fear of losing the thread of Amṛt's argument, which often resulted, as I realised too late,¹² in clumsy French and scant intelligibility. It is however not unfair to say that some passages of the *YH* and of the *Dī* (in the second chapter especially) are so obscure as to baffle the efforts of the translator -- which of course does mean that I could not sometimes have rendered them more felicitously.

To come now to a few specific points, I know that the French translation of *Yoginīhṛdaya* by '*Le cœur de la Yoginī*', though simple and rather obvious, is unsatisfactory in so far as the term *hṛdaya* (or *hṛd*) in *śaiva* non-dualistic Tantric traditions has many meanings and connotations which the French 'cœur' has not, even in mystical works. Amṛt explains *hṛdayam* as *mahāguhyam*, 'great mystery', inaccessible to thought, word or senses (*manovāgindriyātītam*). It is, for him, the divine plane, both transcendent and immanent, where the Goddess, pure Consciousness,¹³ manifests her glory and her power. This *hṛdaya*, too, is the plane of human consciousness (and the center in the subtle body) where this glory is experienced. Those are notions going back to the *Upaniṣad*-s -- which Amṛt quotes. *Hṛdaya*, in addition, is the esoteric truth, the secret spiritual message of the *YH*. This diversity of meanings is rather inadequately evoked by the French word 'cœur'.

The three chapters (*paṭala*) of the *YH* are named, respectively, *cakrasaṃketa*, *mantrasaṃketa* and *pūjāsaṃketa*, the purpose of the text being, we are told, to teach how to realize mystically (in the "heart") "the

¹¹ M. Foucault, *Naissance de la clinique*, Paris, PUF, 1963, Préface, pp. XII-XIII. The whole, very remarkable, passage would be worth quoting.

¹² The shortcomings or errors of one's work are unfortunately more easily perceived on the printed page...

¹³ *Svasaṃvit*, that is, who is conscious of Herself or that is Consciousness itself. The supreme godhead, in non-dualist *śaivism* is *saṃvit*, consciousness.

threefold *saṃketa* of the goddess Tripurā (*trividhaḥ tripurādevyāḥ saṃketaḥ*). The term *saṃketa*, one of the usual meanings of which is agreement, appointment, meeting, underscores an essential aspect of the teaching of the YH, namely the "meeting" -- the salvific common presence, that is -- of Bhairava and the Goddess (Śiva and Śakti) in the *cakra*, the *mantra* and the *pūjā*, whose power and efficacy are solely due to this presence in them of the deity in its most powerful and creative form, that of the union of its two, male and female, aspects. No French word can evoke this. I, therefore, left *saṃketa* untranslated. I did, however, sometimes translate it by "pratique conventionnelle" since there are passages where, while referring to the above meaning, *saṃketa* is in fact not entirely at variance with its recognised meanings.¹⁴

The first chapter, *cakrasaṃketa*, shows this common united presence of Śiva and Śakti in the *śrīcakra*, the ritual diagram whose inner portion is made up of four triangles apex upward considered as male (= Śiva) intersecting with five triangles apex downward, female (= Śakti). The creative power of the Goddess, as well as the structure of the *śrīcakra* (which is her diagrammatic form) result from this "meeting". The constituent parts of the *śrīcakra*-s together with the deities and powers that animate it, are described by the YH in different ways and it is the inner realization by the adept, in his "heart",¹⁵ through an intense identifying meditation (*bhāvanā*) of this nature of the *śrīcakra* that will lead him to liberation. Among the methods leading to this goal are ten *mudrā*-s. This term is evidently not translated. I, however, mention it here because these *mudrā*-s are understood by the YH and are described by Amṛt as being both hand-gestures and deities: while displaying a *mudrā*, the adept¹⁶ himself is identified with the deity that this *mudrā* is.¹⁷

¹⁴ Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, p. 1126, gives as meanings of *saṃketa* 'agreement, compact, engagement'; but also 'intimation, hint; ...preconcerted sign; ...a short explanation of a grammatical rule; ...condition, provision ...'.

¹⁵ This realisation is sometimes described by Amṛt as *hṛdayaṃgamatā* or *hṛdayaṃgamībhāva*, that is, the penetration in the "heart". These terms are used, too, by Abhinavagupta (in the *Parātriṃśikāvivaraṇa* notably) to express this inner and deep experience. A French equivalent to these terms is not easy to find.

¹⁶ By adept (or the French 'adepte') I translate the Sanskrit *sādhaka* which can be understood *lato sensu* as any initiated believer of a cult, but which technically and precisely means a *śaiva* adept who, after having received the first initiation, *saṃyadīkṣā*, has received the *sādhakadīkṣā* which makes him into a *sādhaka*, i.e. one who wishes to succeed (*sidh*) in a particular field through the practice of a *mantra*. This is the sense in which *sādhaka* is used in the YH and the *Dī*.

¹⁷ The third *paṭala* describes somewhat similarly eight *siddhi*-s, which are both deities and supernatural powers the *sādhaka* acquires by the cult of the Goddess.

When introducing some passages (e.g. pp. 22, 25, 31, etc.) where parts or aspects of the *śrīcakra* which the adept is to visualize and meditate are described,¹⁸ Amṛt sometimes declares that these parts will be set forth *śavāsanam*. By this he means to say that such parts are described together with (*sa*) the *vāśana*-s, the mental representation associated with them, which the *sādhaka* is to evoke by mental effort of the *bhāvanā*. If the first meaning is not very far from the usual ones of *vāśana*, understood as the impression left in the mind by past experience, or else imagination, inclination, the last one is less common. All this makes it difficult to translate the word satisfactorily. I, therefore, sometimes do not translate *śavāsanam*, or I translate it as 'avec les représentations qui l'accompagnent': more a gloss than a translation.

The role of the *bhāvanā* is even more important in the second *paṭala*, the so-called *mantrasaṃketa*, devoted to an exposition of the secret meanings of the *śrīvidyā*, the fifteen-syllables *mantra* of Tripurasundarī, or, more precisely and to use the very words of the *YH* (2.14-15), to an explication of the different forms of the conventional practice and understanding of her *mantra* (*mantrasaṃketakas tasyāḥ*), an understanding to be obtained only by following the teachings of this tradition (*pāramparyeṇ [eva] labhyate*). These secret traditional approaches to the understanding and the soteric use of the *mantra* are called *artha* by the *YH*. For brevity's sake I sometimes translate *artha* as 'sens' (meaning). But what the *YH* here expounds are not different meanings, properly so-called, of the *śrīvidyā*. They are esoteric symbolical interpretations of its syllables, together with meditative and tantric *yoga* practices meant to bring the adept (a veritable *sādhaka*) to realise mystically the metaphysical import (and thus the efficient and salvific power) of the *mantra*. This is not what we would consider (and translate) as "meaning": what is to be conveyed by these *artha*-s is an ensemble of Tantric speculations and explanations as to how these notions are to be experienced -- it is not the meaning of a word. The *artha*-s, however, can be said to be, in such cases, mental objects on which to concentrate, which is one of the usual meanings of the Sanskrit word *artha*.

There are six such "meanings" in the *YH*, the first of which is the *bhāvārtha*, a term I translated as 'sens littéral' since the *YH* describes it as being nothing else than the meaning of the syllables of the *mantra* (*akṣarārtho hi bhāvārthaḥ kevalaḥ*) and since Amṛt says that it is what these syllables signify (*abhideya*) or express, and *abhidheya* is the meaning given to the word *artha* in the *Mahābhāṣya*. In the *YH* it is actually nothing of the sort. Of the six *artha*-s, this first one is the most difficult to grasp. Amṛt's *Dī*, replete as it is with esoteric symbolism and cosmogonic and mystico-linguistic speculation, does not by far always

¹⁸ This chapter does not describe the actual drawing of the *śrīcakra* diagram, but its *avatāra*, its "descent", i.e. its cosmic manifestation as a form of the Goddess, and how this cosmic *cakra* is to be visualized and meditated by the *sādhaka*..

clarify what is meant. I tried to understand and translate this chapter with reference to the notions and practices of the Tripurā cult and to the *dakṣiṇāmnāya* doctrine, but I am not sure to have succeeded in spite of the help given me by Pdt. V. V. Dvivedi who has an excellent traditional understanding of this system.

One of the small but tiresome difficulties one meets -- not particularly in this chapter but generally when translating Tantric works dealing with *mantra*-s -- occurs in what is called the *uddhāra*, the "extraction" of the *mantra*-s: the usually cryptic enunciation of their constituent syllables. Those are sometimes referred to by conventional names not seldom difficult to decipher, or they are not given in their proper order: this Amṛt does sometimes. Another method, which Amṛt does not resort to but which, for instance, Jayaratha uses in his commentary on the *Nityāṣoḍaśikārnava*, the parent text of YH, is the use of secret geometrical patterns or diagrams called *prastāra* (display, spreading out) or *gahvara* (hiding place), where the constituent letters of the *mantra* are to be chosen from among the 49/50 letters of the Sanskrit alphabet that are displayed in a particular order in such a diagram. Since the pattern and the disposition in it of the letters are secret, the actual sound pattern of the *mantra* remains hidden to the non-initiate.¹⁹ Though not concealing the *uddhāra* of the *śrīvidyā* -- probably because it was well known -- the YH does not give it, and the *Dī*, though mentioning some of its phonemes, never quotes it *in toto*.

The last *paṭala* of the YH, the *pūjāsaṃketa*, deals with the *śrīcakrapūjā*: the worship of the Goddess and of her *āvāraṇadevatā*-s made on and with the *śrīcakra*, the cult unfolding following the pattern of that diagram from its outer square enclosure to the dot, the *bindu*, in the center. The chapter describes a rather usual form of tantric *pūjā* and offers thus no particular difficulty. The ritual sequence includes a very long series of *nyāsa*, that is, of placing on the officiating adept's body of letters, *mantra*-s/deities and elements of the diagram so as to pervade it with the power of these entities. *Nyāsa* I translate into French as 'imposition', the English version of the word being 'placing'. A *nyāsa* however may be *vyāpaka*: shall we say pervading, "diffusant"? Or it may be done *vyāpakatvena*: 's'étendant sur(tout) le corps': very imperfect renderings of all the Sanskrit term.

The cult ends with what the YH names *japa* but which is not really a *japa*, a ritual muttering of *mantra*, but a complex yogic and mystical practice associating meditation (*bhāvanā*, that is) of the *śrīvidyā*, control of the breaths and raising of the *kuṇḍalinī*. *Japa* is a term I usually do not translate since 'récitation mantrique' does not at all convey the real nature of the practice.²⁰ In the present case, even when the Sanskrit of

¹⁹ On these secret geometrical patterns, see the Appendix "*Prastāra* and *gahvara*" of J. A. Schoterman's edition and translation of the *Ṣaṭsāhasrasaṃhitā*, Leiden, Brill, 1983, Chaps. 1-5.

²⁰ See A. Padoux, "Contributions à l'étude du *mantraśāstra*, III Le *japa*", in

the *YH* or of the *Dī* offers no difficulty, it is not always easy to see clearly what the actual practice of *japa* they describe or allude to consists in.

Generally, the *YH* and (still more) the *Dī* confront the translator with the problems all translators, or students, of the *śaiva* non-dualist texts have to tackle, the difficulty being perhaps greater for a French than for an English translation. There is, for instance, the difficulty in finding not too unsatisfactory French equivalents for the Sanskrit words evoking light, luminousness and, especially, both light and movement, that the *śaiva* schools use with reference to the deity and to its cosmic activity. Such is *ullāsa* or *sphuraṇa/sphurattā*, for which 'splendeur' is inadequate (and usually translates in French *tejas*), whereas 'irradiation vibrante' is nearer to a gloss than to a translation. 'Fulguration' conveys the light, not the throbbing. *Ābhāsa*, too, the luminous manifestation of the universe by the deity -- its 'apparaître lumineux' or 'manifestation lumineuse' -- is not easy to transpose. One could add that for this luminous divine play -- which the *YH* I, 55 compares to a wave, *ūrmi* -- for this cosmic play, this *līlā*, the French 'jeu' is very inadequate: in our "disenchanted" world, we do not live in a cosmos of divine playfulness... The fundamental *śaiva* concept of *ābhāsa*, of the "shining forth", the apparition or manifestation of the cosmos as a luminous display of the divinity, may be translated but not rendered by 'l'apparaître divin' or 'l'apparaître lumineux de la divinité'. Similarly, the very interesting notion of *pratibhā* ('to appear in the mind, to become clear or manifest' according to Monier-Williams) which, on the cosmic plane, is the inner creativity, felt as luminously manifested, of the deity: the very essence of the divine consciousness according to Abhinavagupta, and, on the psychological level, the illuminative intuition of this reality, can only very lamely be translated by 'illumination' or 'intuition créatrice'.²¹

To take another example, *prakāśa* is, in those *śaiva* traditions, the primordial light, the supreme divine reality which is light, illumination, but also consciousness. *Prakāśa* is the masculine, quiescent aspect of the deity. I translate it as 'lumière' or 'lumière-conscience', or sometimes as 'conscience lumineuse', terms that do not convey really the import of the Sanskrit word. They may somehow suffice only in so far as they are understood within the ideological framework of non-dualist śaivism, and especially of the Pratyabhijñā where *prakāśa* is correlated with *vimarśa*, which is the (feminine) active aspect of the godhead. But what is really *vimarśa*, and how to translate it? It is the awareness the divine consciousness has of itself, an awareness or self-reflection (self-reference?) that gives it life, activity, freedom.²² No French (or English)

Bulletin de l' Ecole Française d' Extrême-Orient, tome LXXVI, pp. 118-164.

²¹ The notion of *pratibhā* is an ancient one, not specific to śaivism. See J. Gonda, "Pratibhā", in *Vision of the Vedic Poets*, The Hague, Mouton, 1963, pp. 318-348.

²² To quote Kṣemarāja's *Parāpraveśikā*: "The nature of the supreme Lord is light

word can do justice to the whole complex of meanings and values of this term. I usually translate it as 'prise de conscience', (sometimes as 'libre conscience'), which is both cumbersome and inadequate. In fact, all Sanskrit terms that in *śaiva* non-dualism refer to forms or aspects of consciousness (or awareness), such, for instance, as *āmarśa*, *parāmarśa* or *pratyavamarśa*, which we may take to mean respectively all-inclusive awareness, synthetic awareness or consideration, and representation or reflexive awareness, are a translator's nightmare. Equally untranslatable are the terms meaning consciousness as such: *saṁvit*, *cit*, *caitanya*, that are sometimes used indifferently, sometimes too with nuances in meaning: *saṁvit* is the divine, supreme, consciousness, *cit*, *caitanya* may evoke something less elevated, whereas *citta*, *citi* is mostly a person's mind or consciousness. In French one can hardly use another word than 'conscience' (or in the latter case 'esprit', which is vague). Other terms, or instances, could easily be quoted, but there is no need to expatiate more on the subject. I need only hope that those who will read my attempt at a translation of the *YH* and of the *Dī* will be kind enough to forgive its all too obvious shortcomings: *kṣamasva me tat*.

(*prakāśātma*) the nature of which is self-awareness (*vimarśa*)...If the [supreme Light] were devoid of this self-awareness it would be powerless, inert". Abhinavagupta in the *Īśvarapratyabhijñānavimarśinī*, defines its essence as "freedom in the interiorisation and manifesting of all things" and characterized by the "rest within itself [of consciousness]" (*svātmaviśranti*). M. Hulin (*Le principe de l'ego dans la pensée indienne classique*, Paris 1978) analyses very subtly the nature of *vimarśa*. I however do not like his translation of the term by "resaisissement".

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Nanda Revisited. Stanzas from the IV Canto of Aśvaghōṣa's Saundarananda

by
Alessandro Passi

Quite some time ago, I had the fortunate opportunity to produce a translation of Aśvaghōṣa's extant *mahākāvyas* for a very benign Milan publisher. Within a period of six years, both the *Buddhacarita* (Sanskrit part), which had already been translated by Carlo Formichi in 1912, and the *Saundarananda*, were published and to some extent annotated.¹

It was my first experience in translation, and I handled it mostly with the recklessness of inexperience, trying to remain within the bounds of a verse by verse prose version in contemporary Italian, intended for a general public.

Looking back through the comfortable mechanisms of hindsight, more than ten years after working on the *Saundarananda*, I feel that, were the task to be undertaken *ex novo*, it would have to be handled somewhat differently -- some attempt in this direction being the purpose of this brief paper.

1. Translation theory and Sanskrit poetry

Despite the wealth of scholarly work on translation available, and the steadily growing effort to produce workable strategies for poetic translation, the translation of poetry may be said to be, at best, a set of established procedures at some point subject to empirical decision-processes on the translator's part. The translator, even allowing for a set of scheduled priorities for reconstructing an equivalent poetic text in another language,² is always limited in the number of features which can actually be worked from the source into the intended target. Given that a perfectly equivalent text is impossible (it would be identical to the source-text), the target is subjectively molded in the measure that each choice rules out other relevant and equally possible equivalences. This is all the more apparent when the source and the target languages belong to distant, unrelated cultures.³

¹ See **Bibliography**.

² One of the main problems being the constant choice the translator is forced to make between semantic and phonetic elements: "Due to the inherent arbitrariness that obtains between sound features and text formation at the systemic level, the compensations entailed in a high priority for sound-structure equivalence are far reaching [...] the preservation of sound features demands certain non-equivalences in other areas". See R. De Beaugrande, *Factors in a Theory of Poetic Translating*, Assen 1978, paragraph 11.2 and p. 104.

³ That cultural relationships may run even deeper in creating affinity between languages than diachronic relationships, is fairly self-evident. Spanish and

Translation has been often and variously defined in terms of conflicting pairs of opposites: possible/impossible,⁴ literal/free, faithful (ugly)/unfaithful (beautiful), formal/functional or pragmatic -- this last being a current reformulation of Nida's "formal" vs. "dynamic" equivalence. For our own purpose I feel that Nida's terminology is both self-explanatory and adequate;⁵ far from leading us to think in terms of mutually exclusive binary pairs, it allows one to visualize translation as being somewhat analogous to an irregularly shaped figure on an elliptical surface, where formal and dynamic equivalence represent the *foci*.

The problem of privileging the formal rather than the dynamic aspect in translating is largely related to one's expectations on the finished product. Religious texts, where strict adherence to the original wording is felt to be important, have often been formally translated, a typical example being the Tibetan Kanjur. Sometimes, moreover, when the impact of the message is especially powerful, a translation or a body of translations will end up modifying the receptor language and creating new subsets within it, as well as, in due time, new reader-expectations. Thus, when a text has scriptural value, a previous tradition of translation may constitute a separate standard of authority, which will in turn influence all successive translation work, a fact Biblical translators are well aware of.⁶

Basque probably allow the translator much more ground for adequate literary translation than Romany and Hindi, despite the fact that the latter are both, strictly speaking, NIA languages, while the former are not even "genetically related" -- whatever one means by that. The typological affinity between a pair of languages is considered ground for high translatability only if the languages involved are in contact and have had parallel cultural evolutions (Even-Zohar, in G. Toury, *Translation. (A Cultural-Semiotic Perspective)*, in T. Sebeok, *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Semiotics*, 1986, p. 1123).

⁴ The latter position being restricted to the strong formulation of the Humboldt-Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, mostly rejected by contemporary linguists.

⁵ "Formal equivalence focuses attention on the message itself, in both form and content. In such a translation one is concerned with such correspondences as poetry to poetry, sentence to sentence, and concept to concept [...], that the message in the receptor language should match as closely as possible the different elements in the source language. [...] In contrast, a translation which attempts to produce a dynamic rather than a formal equivalence is based on 'the principle of equivalent effect' (Rieu and Phillips, 1954 [the reference is to: "Translating the Gospels", *Concordia Theol. Monthly*, XXV]). In such a translation one is not so concerned with matching the receptor-language message, but with the dynamic relationship [...], that the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message". E. Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating*, Leiden 1964, p. 159.

⁶ E. Nida, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

On the whole, however, modern practice, if not modern scholarship, exhibits the tendency to privilege the dynamic approach, this being especially the case with prose literary texts. By expressing source-language features with target-language equivalents more or less familiar to the reader, the translated text achieves communication with a minimum decoding effort, the ideal being that the reader's impact with the translation give rise to an emotional or aesthetic experience as close as possible to the original reader's, at the cost of a comparable amount of energy (reading time, concentration, reference to extra-textual sources, etc.).

In the case of poetry, however, one deals with two added dimensions of complexity. In the first place, the high communication load of poetic language. Entropy, a measure of the quantity of information, i.e. of the non-redundancy and non-predictability of sequential items within a message, has been demonstrated to be higher for poetic than for non-poetic texts.⁷ Information increases the communication load, sometimes considerably, to the point of appreciably slowing down the decoding process: we are all aware of the fact that poetry must at times be re-read or systematically analyzed (consider, for instance, Eliot's *Waste Land*) to be fully appreciated. And the aesthetic impact of poetry, though not identifiable with these features, is definitely related to their implementation.

Secondly, the formal structure of rhythm and meter. These function on the one hand as "binders", giving cohesion, coherence and some amount of predictability to the *significans*, while, on the other hand, adding something to the *significatum* by the use of synesthetic, kinesthetic, emotive effects.

These two factors bear heavily on the translation of poetry. In the presence of texts belonging to a distant culture with respect to the one of the receptor language, translators are often tempted to pare down their text to simple semantic equivalence, granted the most linear and non-problematic solution, dispensing with all strategies for recreating meter, word-play, assonance, etc. (thus implementing the familiar maxim that "poetry is what is lost in translation").

When dealing with Sanskrit -- a non-primary, erudite and literary language for a long part of its history -- and *kāvya* -- literature as a form of conscious art -- the problem of establishing an adequate medium for translation should be posited, at least in theory, and discussed.

Obviously, a complete dynamic equivalence would be impossible --

⁷ "A high degree of semantic entropy is a regular phenomenon in modern poetry, one of those essential features that distinguish poetic language from every-day language. Translators are aware of this and treat the syntagms and phrases of every-day language as a unit and substitute for them the most usual word groups of the target language. *On the other hand, they translate the similes and unexpected turns of poetry word by word* [italics mine]. See I. Fónagy, "Communication in Poetry", in *Word*, XVII, 1961, p. 204.

texts would have to be rendered in a classical language, such as Greek or Latin, (which are now far less practiced in the West than Sanskrit ever was in Classical India), *à la Schlegel*, to a projected audience of accomplished classicists; in this respect, the Classical Arabic still widely used as a literary medium in Arabic-speaking countries is probably the closest contemporary equivalent to Sanskrit.

Attempts at close dynamic equivalence are also hindered by the powerfully structured aesthetics of *kāvya*, for which the Western reader has little to go by in his own experience. From the point of view of language alone, the most intricate compositions of *citrakāvya* have some parallel in Mediaeval and Renaissance poetry; otherwise they are far removed from modern taste. In all cases they are extremely difficult to reproduce. From the point of view of aesthetics, the nuances of *rasa*, *riti* and *dhvani* are often lost on us. *Alaṃkāra* alone finds a certain spontaneous if sometimes misleading correspondence with the use of figures of speech, consecrated in our use from classical times.

Meter is the third, if rarely discussed, aspect.⁸ Sanskrit meter obviously has no equivalent in modern Western poetry. It may to some extent be reconstructed in languages that employ accentual meter, like English, with results that give an interesting approximation of *longa/brevis* variations -- whereas in languages like Italian, where meter is entirely syllabic, such a reconstruction is far more difficult.⁹ Generally, however, attempts at recreating Sanskrit versification will end up substituting domestic features with exotic ones, thereby enhancing formal equivalence and our feeling of foreignness with regards to the text. One feels that a dynamic approach with some regard to meter is on the whole best pursued by referring to the structures and forms of our own versification, and choosing the type which most closely approximates the original in function, rather than in form. Thus, in English, the epic *śloka* might be well represented by iambic meter, (pentameter or hexameter), as being closer to natural speech and much-used in epic or pseudo-epic

⁸ The late John Brough was in this respect a very notable exception. See J. Brough, *Poems from the Sanskrit*, Harmondsworth, 1968, pp. 19-47; *Idem*, "Poetry in Classical Sanskrit", in *Ind. T.*, III-IV, 1976, pp. 96ff. I will not hesitate to point out that, substantially, there is not much to be added on the translation of Sanskrit verse after what Prof. Brough outlined in his Introduction to *Poems from the Sanskrit*. Moreover, his experiments with metrical translation in English remain, in my opinion, unrivaled and absolutely delightful.

⁹ I am well aware that a meter based on syllable quantity can never be adequately explained in terms of rhythm or stress, as we understand them in English or other European languages, see S. Pollock, *Aspects of Versification in Sanskrit Lyric Poetry*, New Haven 1977, pp. 110-116. Our reconstructions are, at best, interesting experiments aimed at modelling part of the "look and feel" of different metrical systems. Some hundred years ago Giosuè Carducci made an earnest attempt in this direction with his *Rime barbare*, 'Barbarian' in that they substituted Latin metrical emulations to the consolidated versification of Italian.

poetry; in Italian, the natural choice would fall on the *endecasillabo*, which allows for 261 theoretical rhythmic variants.¹⁰ A similar choice may be made for other meters, such as the *upajāti* below, while the other, longer *ṛttas* of *kāvya* may be sometimes reanalyzed and broken down into smaller units, eventually in correspondence to their *yatis*.

These three factors, more than the obvious differences in grammar structure and syntax, would place an ideal dynamically-oriented translation at a very great distance from the original; a strong formally-oriented approach, on the other hand, would emphasize the feeling of quaintness or alieness that translations from distant languages often have -- and that the original, no matter how intricate or involute or distant from the spoken language of its day, **did not possess**. Sanskrit poetry has never been a stranger in its own land, not is it today, to the *paṇḍitas* fortunate enough to have received traditional training in it.

Toury has proposed the following four-phase description as best adapted to the process of translating:¹¹

- 1- decomposition of the initial entity up to a certain, varying level, while assigning to its constituents at this level the status of "features";
- 2- selection of the features to be retained, that is an assignment of relevance to some part of the initial entry's features;
- 3- transfer of the selected features over one (or more than one) semiotic barrier;
- 4- (re)composition of a resultant entity around the transferred features, while assigning to them the same or another extent of relevancy.

These phases are to be understood as forming a *continuum*, and not necessarily an ordered one; to some extent, for instance, (2) may be determined by the possibility of effecting (3) or (4). This description is particularly adequate to the translation of poetry, where the translator must constantly bridge over to (4) and try different solutions for (2) and (3) to fit.

One might conclude with a tentative and rather middle-path indication: translating Sanskrit poetry might perhaps be best pursued under as broad a dynamic perspective as is necessary to produce a text that will be immediately felt as poetry by the intended reader; aside from this primary objective, which we feel entails a strong feeling for meter as well as for meaning and image, other equivalences, even pertaining to a more formally-oriented mirroring of *kāvya* features, may be retained, provided that their selection not add an excessive load of foreignness and exoticness to the translation.

¹⁰ By comparison, the most frequent pattern for the *śloka* (x x x x | ~ ~ ~ x | x x x x | ~ ~ ~ x ||, where x indicates an anceps) alone, theoretically allows for 512 different combinations (not all of which are allowed).

¹¹ G. Toury, *op. cit.*, 1986, p. 1114.

2. Āśvaghoṣa's *Saundarananda* -- Stanzas for a metrical translation

The intents of this earliest extant author of Buddhist *kāvya*, part of whose works have somewhat precariously percolated down to our times, are explicitly declared in *Saund.* XVIII, 63-64 as religious and paraenetic, poetic form having been added as the odd spoonful of sugar for the bitter medicine of salvation. Consequently to the strategies of *delectando docere*, the *Saundarananda* -- especially the first ten cantos -- is visibly molded by narrative intents, and approximates modern western taste more than most *mahākāvyas*. In this respect, the greater freedom allowed by the Nanda-legend, as compared to the more strictly codified hagiography of the *Buddhacarita*, may have played its part. Together with the *Buddhacarita*, it is a work intended to be read, or rather, as the author remarks, "heard", by a relatively wide public. This should be kept in mind by the translator when defining the impact the translation should have on its public.

The fourth canto, *Bharyāyācitaka*, depicts the conjugal happiness of the Buddha's half-brother Nanda and his spouse at a time when the Buddha is preaching in Kapilavāstu. When the Tathāgata makes his begging rounds to Nanda's own home, everyone is too busy to notice him until after he leaves. Nanda, aghast at his household's lack of courtesy, rushes after his *guru* to make amends, only to find himself (in *sarga* V) the object of a guile aimed at inducing his own *pravrajana*: the Buddha, without saying a single word, hands him his begging bowl. Too embarrassed to refuse, Nanda tries to slip away with the bowl in his hands, but the Buddha blocks the road, leads him to the *vihāra*, and has him tonsured. He will never go back to his wife, thereby breaking his promise to her, of returning after paying homage to his brother.¹²

The meter from stanzas 1 to 44 is the eleven-syllable *upājati*, a mixture of *indravajra* and *upendravajra*, characterized by an initial "iambic" clause:

¹² I have never quite been able to come to terms with the begging-bowl incident. Even allowing for the immense gulf which separates us from Classical India in terms of accepted social behaviour, family and clan loyalties, incidence of *dharma* as a strong value, etc., the feeling that Nanda has been "unfairly coerced" remains powerful even after many readings, and may have some ground in the way Āśvaghoṣa portrayed his inner conflict (the material *per se* is traditional and uncontroversial; see *Theragāthā*, 157-58, *Udāna*, *vagga* III; *Jātaka* 182, Buddhaghosa's commentary to *Dhammapada*, 13-14 and *NIB*, pp. 209-10 for other non-Pāli sources). Leaving aside one's own bias, the possibility remains of a reflection of the author's personal struggle with a life of celibacy, for which see Johnston, *The Buddhacarita or Acts of the Buddha, part II*, Calcutta 1936, pp. XCVI-XCVII. Chinese tradition is consistent in depicting Āśvaghoṣa as an adult convert to Buddhism, not through spontaneous conversion, but in consequence of his defeat in a philosophical debate with Parśva (or Pūrṇa). Nanda, for all his weakness, if not because of it, is at all times the more convincing character.

| x - | - - |

and a falling pattern in the rest of the quarter:

| - - - | - - | - x |

This effect is at least partially reproduceable in English;¹³ for instance, the first *pāda*:

munau bruvāṇe 'pi tu tatra dharmam

may be reformulated as:

But though the Sage there was expounding *dharma*.

On the whole, however, the English pentameter functions best through metric variation and substitutions, with a mixture of different rhythmical patterns, a feature absent in *upajāti* except for the initial and the final syllable.

In the following examples, I will attempt a reasoned retranslation of some stanzas from the first part of 4th canto, with a measure of textual discussion where necessary.

IV, 1-7

*munau bruvāṇe 'pi tu tatra dharmam
dharmam prati jñātiṣu cādṛteṣu |
prāsāda-saṁstho madanaika-kāryaḥ
priyāsahāyo vijahāra Nandaḥ ||1||*

But, though the Sage there was expounding *dharma*,
And unto *dharma* kinsfolk showed their zeal,
Within the palace, passion his sole duty,
In his beloved's company dwelt Nanda.

In theory, one might separate *dharmam prati*, and refer it to *pāda a*, "expounding *dharma* for *dharma*'s sake", see for instance *Buddhacarita*, XIV, 104; but this is on the whole weaker than the above.

Bruvāṇe: "expounding" parallels Johnston's text; strictly speaking, the best choice would be "speaking on *dharma*",¹⁴ but the connotative associations linked with "speaking on" something (a conference or lecture) make it seem too worldly.

¹³ And in Italian, as one of the permitted variations on the *endecasillabo*; for instance Dante's

"Ed elli a me: vano pensiero aduni"
(*Inf.* VII, 52).

¹⁴ "Speaking of the doctrine", A. K. Warder, *Indian Kāvya Literature*, Vol. II, 1972, p. 162.

Madanaikākārya: Johnston's "absorbed in love" is a non-committal rendering, both *madana* and *kārya* requiring some restructuring. *Madana* is solidly attested as "passion", and there are no close occurrences of synonyms like *kāma* to create conflict.¹⁵ More relevant still, the interplay between *priya* and *priyā* in IV, 1, 2, requires some kind of double equivalent, for which "love" and "beloved",¹⁶ "lover" or "loved one" are better suited than other choices such as "endearment" and "dear one".

Kārya as "duty" generates no conflict with *dharma*, which has been left purposely untranslated;¹⁷ the implications of the text here are fairly precise: Nanda has lost his social decorum, as is stated in the following stanza:

*sa cakravākyeva hi cakravākas
tayā sametaḥ priyayā priyārhaḥ |
nācintayad Vaiśramaṇaṁ na Śakraṁ
tat-sthāna-hetoḥ kuta eva dharmam || 2||*

For, like a sheldrake with its mate, in union,
Himself worthy of love, with her, beloved,
He never thought of Indra or Kubera¹⁸
On her account -- and even less of *dharma*...

¹⁵ While maintaining consistency in translated lexical items on a one-to-one basis is of course the ideal solution, it is, in my experience, often impossible. The second-best strategy is to try for coherent, conflict-free subunits within parts of the translated text. This is especially the case with the Sanskrit epics, where greater length increases the chance of instances in which an established lexical equivalent comes into conflicts with the general context or with other synonyms.

¹⁶ So Warder, *op. cit.*, *ibid.*

¹⁷ *Dharma* is by now a recognized loan-word in English, and it defines itself far better than partial equivalents such as Law, Duty, Righteousness, Justice, etc. Generally speaking, non-translation of a term should be avoided as a matter of principle not because it implies that the translator has not been up to his or her task (the moralist objection...), but simply because the introduction of an unfamiliar lexical element increases the communication load -- to put it bluntly, footnotes slow down reading and are a nuisance. Sometimes, though, this is still preferable: in van Buitenen's otherwise wonderfully legible translation of the *Mahābhārata*, an initial effort to understand what a *kṣatriya* was would have freed readers from having to cope with hundreds of dubious "barons".

¹⁸ *Vaiśramaṇa* for *Vaiśravaṇa* is to be considered common in Buddhist texts. See A. Gawronski "Notes on the Saundarananda. Critical and Explanatory. Second Series", *Prace Komisji Orientalistycznej Polskiej Akademji Umiejetności*, VI, 1922, pp. 8-9 and R. Salomon, "The Buddhist Sanskrit of Aśvaghoṣa's Saundarananda", in WZKS, XXVII, 1983, p. 108.

The substitution "Indra and Kubera" is well justified from a reader-oriented point of view, while the inversion of order serves meter. *Tat-sthāna-hetu* was rendered "because of her presence" by Johnston and similarly by Warder, and "stando con lei" by myself (*NIB*); as a fourth possible alternative (extremely tentative), one might take *sthāna* here as "case, occasion", *tat* being *Sundarī*; the translation above follows this lead. The point of the verse is that Nanda paid no heed to the obligations of *ksatriya* caste and householder status.

lakṣmyā ca rūpeṇa ca Sundarīti
stambhena garveṇa ca Māninīti |
dīptyā ca mānena ca Bhāminīti
yato babhāṣe trividhena nāmnā ||3||

"Fair" for her splendid majesty and beauty
 "Proud" for her haughtiness and arrogance
 "Blaze" for her radiant looks and for her temper --
 Thus did they call her with three different names.

There is some doubt over the repetition *Māninī/mānena*, the latter in *c* being possibly corrupted for *bhāṣena*, *bhāvena* or *bhanena* (conjectures by various scholars and editors, see *SN*, *SNT*, notes). *Bhāminī* here is derived from the separate roots *bhā* "shine, appear" and *bhām* "be angry", and meant to fit both *dīpti* and *māna*; "Blaze" attempts to reflect both semantic fields.

sā hāsahaṁsā nayanadvirephā
pīnastanātyunnatapadmakośā |
bhūyo babhāṣe svakuloditena
strīpadminī Nandadivākareṇa ||4||

Where¹⁹ all-white geese were smiles, and bees were eyes,
 And upturned lotus buds generous breasts --
 Lily-pond woman, she shone forth even more
 Through Nanda, high sun of his family.

This is typical of Aśvaghoṣa's *sakala-rūpakas*, which for the most part do not yield comfortably to translation. The addition of "all-white" for

¹⁹ The use of *sā* as a stylistic medium in *subhāṣita* to convey "the image of a woman who is so idealized she defies description and therefore naming" has been analyzed in K. Langer, "Compartmentalization and Clusters of Words for Women and the Role of *sā* in the Portrayal of Women in Sanskrit Court Poetry", *JAOS*, CI, 1981, pp. 177-193) and may well have its origins here -- possibly as a simple means for emphasizing the uniqueness of the heroine in the context. *Sā* separated from its referent confers tension to the sentence, *strīpadminī* releases it. I have tried to use "where" in a similar way. See also 6, 12d, 15 below.

the geese is necessary -- the association of whiteness with laughter²⁰ would not be immediate or intelligible otherwise.

Sun-Nanda is *svakulodita* "arisen in his own family" because he springs from the solar dynasty;²¹ otherwise, "exalted within his family". I have reservations on Johnston's remarks about a reference to the sun's Kulaparvatas here.²²

*rūpeṇa cātyantamanohareṇa
rūpānurūpeṇa ca ceṣṭitena |
manuṣyaloke hi tadā babhūva
sā Sundarī strīṣu nareṣu Nandaḥ || 5||*

For beauty past all compare breathtaking
And for their bearing, beauty's retinue,
Did they within the human world stand out --
Fair among women, Nanda among men.

*sā devatā nandanacārīṇīva
kulasya nāndījananaś ca Nandaḥ |
atītya martyān anupetya devān
sr̥ṣṭāv abhūtām iva bhūtadhātṛā ||6||*

She, like a deity roaming Nandana
And Nanda, sire to his family's blessing,
Appeared as if created by the Maker
Surpassing mortals, though not quite divine.

The "unattained" godliness of Nanda and Sundarī expressed by the *utprekṣā* is justified by the first two *pādas*: in the previous *upamā*, Fair is like a deity (does *devatā* generally connote a minor god, as in *vanadevatā*?); Nanda actually induces *nāndī*, but isn't really a god.²³

*tām Sundarīm cen na labheta Nandaḥ
sā vā niṣeveta na tam natabhrūḥ |
dvandvaṃ dhruvaṃ tad vikalaṃ nā śobet-
ānyonyahīnāv iva rātricandrau ||7||*

²⁰ SNT, p. 20.

²¹ Gawronski 1922, pp. 9-10.

²² SNT, p. 20. Charpentier (J. Charpentier, "Some Notes on the Saundarananda", in *JRAS*, 1934, pp. 117-118) takes *sva-* as a reference to the (established) fact that Nanda and Fair belonged to the same family.

²³ Obviously, the names Nanda and Sundarī should both be translated equally, ie. either left in Sanskrit or put into English; but I cannot come up with any good equivalent for Nanda -- "Joy" or "Leisure" would hardly be adequate.

If Nanda hadn't ever won his Fair
 Or if that arched-browed girl had not had him,
 Those two, impaired, would surely not have shone,
 Like day and night deprived of one another.

IV, 12-18

*vibhūṣayām āsa tataḥpriyām sa
 siṣevīṣus tāṇi na mṛjāvahārtham |
 svenaiva rūpeṇa vibhūṣitā hi
 vibhūṣaṇānām api bhūṣaṇaṇi sā ||12||*

He once²⁴ proceeded to adorn his loved one
 Wishing to serve her, not to bestow lustre:
 In fact, being adorned by her own beauty,
 Of ornaments the ornament was she.

Sa in *a* 11 reflects *sā* in *d* 11; I have tried to achieve a similar effect by placing "he" and "she" in first and last position respectively.

*dattvātha sā darpaṇam asya haste
 mamāgrato dhāraya tāvad enam |
 viśeṣakaṇi yāvad ahaṇi karomī-
 tyuvāca kāntam sa ca tam babhāra ||13||*

Placing a mirror in her sweetheart's hand
 "Hold that in front of me, and in the while
 I'll paint a beauty mark upon my face".
 She said to him -- the mirror fast he bore.

Some amount of filling ("upon my face", "the mirror fast") is at times unavoidable, if the metrical structure is to be respected; a non-committal rendering of *viśeṣaka* (Johnston here avoids the term: "while I paint myself"), moreover, would probably fall short of explaining what exactly Fair is doing. The two finite verbs at opposite ends of the last *pāda* give the feeling of Nanda's immediate response to his wife's bidding.

*bhartus tataḥśmaśru nirīkṣamānā
 viśeṣakaṇi sāpi cakāra tādṛk |
 niśvāsavātena ca darpaṇasya
 cikitsayitvā nijaghāna Nandaḥ ||14||*

Then she beheld her husband's moustache, and
 She too fashioned a beauty-mark just like it,

²⁴ I follow Johnston here in translating *tataḥ* "once"; the previous lines 8-11 do not seem to refer to any specific episode. Stanza 10 is probably spurious and 11 presents an unsolvable crux, see *SN*, *NIB*.

While Nanda, having attracted her attention,
Assailed the mirror, blowing with his breath.

Nanda, who bore, *babhāra*, the mirror in 13 d, is of course twice the *bhartṛ*. This *śleṣa* has successfully resisted my attempts at translation. The rendering of *cikitsayitvā* and *nijaghāna* (+ genitive) proposed here is straight dictionary deduction; Johnston's "breathed intentionally on the mirror" relies on Hultsch's "*und Nanda trübte absichtlich den Spiegel*";²⁵ actually, if *cikitsati* is "to care, to be desirous", the causative should naturally mean: "make desirous". Curiously, Hakeda²⁶ omits this passage from his list of *cit* desideratives. *Cikitsā* appears in *cikitsārtha*, SN, XIV, 11 in its regular meaning: "for the sake of a cure". *Nihan-* in the sense of "assault" is quite suited to the context -- the mirror is assaulted, its function temporarily destroyed, etc. So also Warder:²⁷ "But by breathing on the mirror/ Nanda countered and frustrated her".

sā tena ceṣṭālalitena bhartuḥ
śāthyena cāntarmanasā jahāsa |
bhavec ca ruṣṭā kila nāma tasmai
lalāṭajihmām bhrkūṭim cakāra ||15||

She, at her husband's playfulness of gesture
And roguishness, laughed within her heart;
Then, just to show him her pretended anger,
She made her forehead crooked with a frown.

The optative *bhavet* may well have a preterite sense here; alternatively, I have taken it as governing a final clause, so: "in order to appear ("be") angry in pretence, etc."²⁸

cikṣepa karṇotpalam asya cāmse
kareṇa savyena madālasena |
pattrāṅgulim cārdhanimilitākṣe
vaktre 'sya tām eva vinirdudhāva ||16||

At his shoulder she threw the lotus from her ear

²⁵ E. Hultsch "Zu Aśvaghōsha's Saundarananda", ZDMG, LXXII, 1918, p. 121.

²⁶ Y. Hakeda, *Characteristics of the Language of the Epics of Aśvaghōṣa especially as compared with that of the Epics of Kālidāsa*, Yale University Ph.D., 1960, pp. 166-67.

²⁷ Warder, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

²⁸ For *bhavet* as preterite, see R. Salomon, *op. cit.*, p. 105. *Nāma* "pretendedly", SN, p. 147, Y. Hakeda, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19.

With her left hand that passion had made languid;
And rubbed her finger-paint over and over
Across his face -- he kept his eyes half-open.

Pattrāṅguli has been variously defined: a "stick of paint" (Johnston), or a "finger which had a film of cosmetic on it" (Warder); also "a flowery pattern".²⁹ As with *viśeṣaka* above, the exact definition of terms pertaining to material culture and daily life is at times elusive.

*tataś calannūpurayoktrābhyām
nakhaprabhodbhāsitarāṅgulibhyām |
padbhyām priyāyā nalinopamābhyām
mūrdhnā bhayān nāma nanāma Nandaḥ ||7||*

His loved-one's feet fettered to wiggling anklets
With toes made all-bright by their shiny nails:
To these, akin to waterlilies, Nanda
Bowed his head low, in mock display of fear.

*sa muktapuṣponmiṣitena mūrdhnā
tataḥ priyāyāḥ priyakṛd babhāse |
suvanavedyām anilāvabhagnaḥ
puṣpātibhārād iva nāgavṛkṣaḥ ||18||*

His head still peeping at the cast-off flower,
He then resembled, his lover's love enticing,
A Nāga-tree with flowers overladen,
Split by the wind upon a golden altar.

The exact meaning of this stanza is unclear. I have followed Johnston in taking *muktapuṣpa* as a reference to the *karṇotpala* in 16. *Unmiṣita*, literally 'peeping', but also 'blooming', allows for a different construction, as in Warder: "He then appeared conciliating his beloved/ like a nāga tree broken down by the wind <onto an altar>/onto the golden bedside table through the excessive weight of its flowers/ with his head as the open fallen flowers"; the same remarks: "*vedī* means "bedside table" and "altar" and the description applies to Nanda and the tree; no doubt he was wearing an elaborate headress, especially of flowers, which it was customary for men to wear".³⁰ The *Nāga*-tree, "studded with flowers with yellow interiors" (VII, 9, Johnston's translation), *Mesua ferrea*, is one of more than twenty plants commonly known in the world as ironwood trees; the flowers of the *Mesua* were used for making cosmetics.

²⁹ J. Charpentier, *op.cit.*, p. 117-118.

³⁰ Warder, *op. cit.*, pp. 163-64.

I am not sure that the double meaning for *vedī* felt relevant by Johnston and Warder is actually intended here; the term in erotic literature is rather *vedikā* (*Kāmasūtra*, I, 4, 7). The altar here, one feels, might very well be Fair herself.

IV, 24-28

The Buddha's consequence-laden appearance at Nanda's palace is powerfully and simply depicted in stanza 24, where the only stylistic device is a fairly elementary *yamaka* in each *pāda*:

*vimānakalpe sa vimānagarbhe
tatas tathā caiva nananda Nandaḥ |
Tathāgataś cāgatabhaiḥsakālo
bhaiḥśāya tasya praviveśa veśma ||24||*

While, in the inner palace, like an aerial palace,
Did Nanda thus indulge in blissful pleasure,
The Buddha, whose time for the begging-round had come,
Entered that very house to beg for alms.

Repetition in the translation mirrors the repetitions in the text; the alliterations are only slightly echoed in: "did Nanda... indulge", "Buddha ... begging". Structurally, these *yamakas* are not dissimilar to the ones found in the epic, e.g. *kharah kharataram vacaḥ*.³¹

*avāṇmukho niṣpraṇayaś ca tasthau
bhrātur grhe 'nyasya grhe yathaiva |
tasmād atho preṣyajanapramādād
bhikṣām alabdhaiva punar jagāma ||25||*

Face down, completely unattached, he stood
Inside his brother's home as in another's;
When, through the negligence of household servants,
He didn't even get his fare, he left.

Niṣpraṇaya: Johnston probably overtranslates: "not making any request", with reference to Pāli (?) and the use of *praṇaya* in the *Arthaśāstra* as 'forced levy'. The regular meaning, 'disaffected', is however perfectly suitable here. The *eva* in *d* is significant.

*kācit pipeṣātra vilepanam hi
vāso 'ṅganā kācid avāsayac ca |
ayojayat snānavidhiṃ tathānyā
jagrathur anyāḥ surabhīḥ srajaś ca ||26||*

³¹ *Rāmāyaṇa*, 3.21.1.

For, at that time, one girl was pounding ointment,
 Another one was perfuming some clothes,
 Another one was getting the bath ready,
 While others still were braiding fragrant wreaths.

Pipeṣātra in *a* is a reasonable conjecture from the better of the two mss's possible readings, *pipeṣāntra* or *pipeṣāttra* (verified from microfilm reproductions). Only the secondary paper ms. definitely has *pipaiṣānuvilepana* (not °*antra*°, as in the crit. ed.); on the basis of its appearance in the *Dīpavaṃsa*, *anuvilepana* was eventually accepted by Johnston³² in lieu of Hultsch's conjecture *aṅgavilepana*, but the word is absent in Trenckner's dictionary. "Girl" bridges over *aṅganā* here, while also reflecting *yuvatyaḥ* in 27, where the plural noun has been substituted with a pronoun.

tasmin gr̥he bhartur ataś carantyaḥ
krīḍānurūpaṃ lalitāṃ niyogam |
kāścīn na buddhaṃ dadṛśur yuvatyo
buddhasya vaiṣā niyataṃ manīṣā ||27||

Therefore, as they obeyed the wanton orders
 Of their master, conforming to his pastimes,
 None of them saw the Buddha in the house --
 Or this was what the Buddha surely wished.

Vaiṣā niyataṃ manīṣā, "Or so the Buddha certainly thought" (Johnston); but, as Charpentier pointed out, an omniscient being could not entertain a possibly false thought. *Tasmin gr̥he* is, of course, misplaced, but this is by far the smoothest rendering.

kācid sthitā tatra tu harmyapṛṣṭhe
gavākṣapakṣe praṇidhāya cakṣuḥ |
vinīṣpatantaṃ sugataṃ dadarśa
payodagarbhād iva dīptaṃ arkam ||28||

But one girl on the top floor of the palace,
 Casting a glance towards where the windows were,
 Beheld the Well-Gone fast slipping away,
 Like blazing sun out from a rain-cloud's heart.

Gavākṣapakṣa, the "window side" of the building, not one window in particular. In the simile, the rain cloud is the palace itself.

This group of stanzas, one feels, marks the narrative division in the *sarga*, and strictly speaking, the end of *saṃbhoga*. The Buddha has been seen and recognized, Nanda will be informed. Henceforward, his actions

³² See NIB, p. 178, SNT, p. 22. with reference to *Dīpavaṃsa*, VI, 8.

are marked with worry, self-doubt and *vipralambha* until they eventually evolve into a positive quest for sainthood -- the *kāvya* likewise culminating in *śāntarasa*. The solution to this conflict begins to take shape only from the 10th *sarga* onwards, when the Buddha induces Nanda to give up Fair, on the explicit promise that if he practices austerities, he will enjoy the Apsarases in his next life; he will gain further insight from the Buddha's direct teaching when he finally realizes that even paradise is transitory.

But there is another point of view -- Fair's. The solution to her dilemma is bound to remain, as it were, *extra moenia*, being limited to two stanzas of prophecy uttered by the Buddha in the very last *sarga*, as an indication that she will eventually adopt the religious life.³³ Nanda's old promise to her, that he will be gone only a few minutes, to return before the body-paint dries up, *viśeṣako yavad ayaṁ na śuṣkaḥ*, remains hopelessly unredeemed; beyond the Tathāgata's prediction, no elaborate or descriptive solution to the deserted wife's unhappiness is provided.

Here, one feels -- but the implication may well be ours and not the author's -- lies some measure of the uncertainty and *duḥkha* of the real world, that not even the solaces of *dharma*, or the compulsory happy ending prescribed by literary taste, can really make amends for.

³³ XVIII, 59, 60; in both cases the prophetic nature of the Buddha's utterance is underlined by the reiterated use of *dhruvaḥ*.

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Translating Scientific Sanskrit

by
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The *Pañcasiddhāntikā* is a poem on mathematical astronomy composed in Sanskrit in the middle of the sixth century A.D. by Varāhamihira, a Maga Brāhmaṇa -- that is, a Zoroastrian descended from those Iranian magi who entered India in the early centuries of the Christian era. In this work Varāhamihira summarizes the contents of five earlier *siddhānta*-s or astronomical text-books, all of which are otherwise lost, but which represented three stages in the early development of mathematical astronomy in India. The *Paitāmahāsiddhānta*, whose epoch falls in 80 A.D., represents the Indian adaptation of early Babylonian solar, lunar, and calendrical theory that took place during the Achaemenid rule in Gandhāra and that is otherwise known primarily through the *Jyotiṣavedāṅga* of Lagadha. The *Vasiṣṭha*, *Romaka*, and *Pauliṣa siddhānta*-s represent the transmission to India in the second, third and fourth centuries A.D. of Hellenistic Greek adaptations of Babylonian theories of the Sun, the Moon, the calendar, and the planets; this Greco-Babylonian phase of Indian astronomy is known to us otherwise only from the *Yavanajātaka* of Sphujidhvaja. The *Romaka* and the *Pauliṣa* were read by Varāhamihira in versions made by Lāṭadeva, who put their epochs in 505 A.D.; this same Lāṭadeva, according to al-Bīrūnī, was the author of the *Sūryasiddhānta* summarized by Varāhamihira, one of the earliest specimens of the Indian adaptation of Greek spherical astronomy whose earliest known representative, the *Paitāmasiddhānta* of the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa*, was composed in about 425 A.D. This *Sūryasiddhānta* follows the *ārdharātrika* or midnight system that had been proposed by Āryabhaṭa shortly after 500 A.D.

The *Pañcasiddhāntikā*, then, encompasses several quite different systems of astronomy, each of which had been developed outside of India and adapted to fit into Indian traditions when it was introduced into the sub-continent. Therefore, a knowledge of Babylonian and Greek astronomy at the various stages in the development of each is essential for understanding this text. Unfortunately, Varāhamihira did not possess such knowledge, nor did Lāṭadeva, with the result that the descriptions of these systems given in the *Pañcasiddhāntikā* are often mistaken or misleading. The translator, then, must relate what Varāhamihira has written to texts on cuneiform tablets or on Greek papyri and other sources, and try to imagine how the Akkadian or Greek algorithms or models came to find the peculiar and sometimes ungrammatical and incomplete expressions in which they are presented in Sanskrit. The task is rendered more difficult by the often corrupt nature of the Sanskrit manuscripts, all of which descend, in two families, from a single incomplete archetype. It is sometimes necessary to rewrite the text, guided by both the astronomical meaning and by the meter; fortunately,

this task is often made easier by quotations from the *Pañcasiddhāntikā* found in commentaries on other texts, though, regrettably, no one undertook to write a commentary on the *Pañcasiddhāntikā* itself.

In order to illustrate some of the problems facing the editor, translator, and commentator on such a text, I intend to present a few examples of text and translation from the edition of the *Pañcasiddhāntikā* prepared by Otto Neugebauer and myself and published by the Danish Royal Academy in two parts in 1970-1971. I began with a passage from the beginning of chapter IX chosen to illustrate both the *bhūtasāṅkhyā* system of expressing numbers employed in the *Pañcasiddhāntikā* and the way in which a recognition of the source of the parameters makes it possible to correct a corrupt text. In this and other transliterations the manuscript reading, when different from the edition, is given in parentheses:

dyugaṇe 'rko 'ṣṭaśataghe
vīpakṣavedārṇave 'rkasiddhānte ||
svarakhāśvidvinavayamod - (svarakhādvidhinavayamod °)
dhr̥te kramād dinadale 'vantyām ||1||
navaśatasahasraguṇite
svaraikapakṣāmbarasvarartūne ||
ṣaḍvyomendriyanavavasū -
viśayajinair bhājite candrah ||2||
navaśataguṇite dadyād
rasaviśayaguṇāmbartuyamapakṣān ||
navavasusaptāṣṭāmbara -
navāśvibhakte śaśāṅkoccam ||3||
śaśiviśayaghnānīndoh
khārkaṅgniḥṛtāni maṇḍalāni <tv>ṛṇam ||
svocce di<g>ghnāni dhanam
svararandhrayamahṛtā<ni> (svaradasrayamoddhr̥te) vikalāḥ ||4||

In the following translation, words in parentheses are not expressed in the Sanskrit text:

1. "In the *Sūryasiddhānta*, if the *ahargaṇa* is multiplied by 800, if 442 is subtracted (from the product), and if (the remainder) is divided by 292,207 in order, (the result) is (the mean longitude of) the Sun at noon at Avantī."
2. "(If the *ahargaṇa*) is multiplied by 900,000, if (the product) is diminished by 670,217, and if (the remainder) is divided by 24,589,506, (the result) is (the mean longitude of) the Moon."
3. "(If the *ahargaṇa*) is multiplied by 900, (if) one adds (to the product), 2,260,356, and if (the sum) is divided by 2,908,789, (the result) is the apogee of the Moon."
4. "Multiply the revolutions of the Moon by 51 and divide (the product) by 3120; (the result, in seconds,) is negative. In the case of

its apogee, multiply (the revolutions) by 10 and divide (the product) by 297; (the result), in seconds, is positive."

The numbers can be confidently restored only when one realizes that they are fractional parts of the parameters of the *ārdharātrikapakṣa* (known from the *Mahābhāskarīya* of Bhāskara and the *Khaṇḍakhādya* of Brahmagupta) or else represent epoch corrections. The reader is referred to the commentary in our edition for the details of this argument as of all the following.

The next example, from chapter XVI, is intended to illustrate both the ambiguity of Sanskrit technical terminology and the need to imagine geometrical models (in this case, the double-epicycle model of the planets) from which the rules may be derived.

*śighrān madhyamahīnād
rāśitritaye gataiṣyadamśajye ||
bhujakoṭī tatparataḥ
śadbhyaḥ patite (patate) sa eva vidhiḥ ||15||
svaparidhiguṇite bhājye
khartugunair vipa<ri>ṇate (vipagate [α], viyuga β) <te ta> taś ca ||
koṭiphalaṁ vyāsārdhe
mṛgakarkyādaḥ cayāpacayam (cayāpacayāḥ) ||16||
tadbhujakṛtiyogapadair
bhājayet tat<o> bhujam khasūryagḥnam
(nanabhūjakhasaryagḥnam) ||
taccāpārdham (tajñāpārdham) mande
hānidhanam śighrakendravaśāt ||17||*

15. "If (the remainder) from the *śighra* diminished by the mean (longitude of the planet) is within three zodiacal signs (i.e., 90°), then the Sines of the traversed and untraversed degrees are the *bhuja* and the *koṭī* (respectively); if it is more than that (90°), then it is subtracted from six (signs) and the same rule applies."

16. "Multiply (the *bhuja* and the *koṭī*) by their (epicycle) circumferences and divide (the products) by 360; thereby are they reduced (to the *bhujaphala* and the *koṭiphala*). The *koṭiphala* is added to the Radius in (the semicircle) beginning with Capricorn (i.e., 270°), subtracted from it in (the semicircle) beginning with Cancer (i.e., 90°)."

17. "Then one should multiply the *bhuja* (*phala*) by 120 and divide (the product) by the square-root of the sum of the squares of that (i.e., $R \pm koṭiphala$) and of the *bhuja* (*phala*). Depending on the argument of the *śighra*, half of the corresponding arc is to be subtracted from or added to (the longitude of) the apogee."

In this example, the text becomes clear only when, realizing the undescribed geometrical model that lies behind it, one supplies the right

words to make it meaningful. More difficult is the next example, from chapter V, where one must imagine an erroneous geometrical model before one can translate the radically emended verses.

ayan<ā>ntarasamṃyuktāt
 tadūnagu<ṇi>tāc(tadūnayuktā) chaṣāṅkaravivivarāt ||
 mūlenāyanavivare
 chinne vikṣepasamṃgūṇite ||1||
 phalam indvarkaviśeṣāc (phalasimdhvarkaviśeṣāc)
 chodhyaṃ tv ayanānukūlavikṣipte (cayanānukūlavikṣipto) ||
 tad vyatyāse deyaṃ
 viparītaṃ pūrvasandhyāyām ||2||
 dīnakṛtsaptamabhavanāt
 tenodayanāḍikādvayaṃ yadi vā ||
 viyati vimale tadendora (tad imdora)
 lokasyālokaṃ āyāti ||3||

1. "Multiply the difference (of the longitudes) of the Sun and Moon increased by the difference of their declinations by (the first difference) diminished by that (second difference); by the square-root (of the product) divide the difference of their declinations multiplied by (the Moon's) latitude."

2. "The result is to be deducted from the difference (of the longitudes) of the Sun and Moon if (the Moon's) latitude is in the same sense as its declination; if it is in the opposite sense, it is to be added. In the case of morning twilight (the procedure) is reversed."

3. "If that (result) has two *nāḍikā*-s of rising -- (to be taken) from the sign that is seventh from the Sun -- then, if the sky is clear, the world's viewing of the Moon occurs."

In the next example, in chapter II, the first verse employs a combination of Julian year and the Sothic cycle, while the next five present a lunar theory based on a Babylonian parameter for the length of a synodic month and a Babylonian zig-zag function presented in ways that are clearly foreshadowed by two Greek papyri and a passage in Geminus; this mixture of sources is characteristic of the Greco-Babylonian stage of Indian astronomy.

kṛtaguṇam ṛtuyutam ekar-(kṛtaguṇaṣamṛtu° α,
 kṛtaguṇaṣatkratu° β)
 tumanuḥṛtaṃ śadyamendubhir vibhajet ||
 śaśikhakhakhayamakṛtasvara-(°svaraḥṛta°)
 navanavavasusaṭkaviṣayonaiḥ ||1||
 rasaguṇanavenduyukte (°yukta)
 śaśiguṇakhaguṇoddhṛte ghanā dyugāṇe ||
 śeṣe navabhir guṇite

gatayo 'ṣṭajinaih padaṃ śeṣam ||2||
 ghanaṣoḍaśahrtaśeṣam
 projjhyādhas triguṇitaṃ caturbhaktam ||
 bhādi kalā dviguṇaghanāḥ
 śaśimūninavayamā rāśyādyāḥ (°yamāśvarāśyādyāḥ) ||3||
 viśayadhṛtayo gatighnā
 gatiśaṣṭhāṃśonitāḥ (gr̥tatiśaṣṭhāṃśonitāḥ α, gr̥natighnā
 śaṣṭhāṃśonitāḥ β) kalāḥ proktāḥ ||
 vedārkaḥ padasaṅkhyā
 gatyardham dhanam ṛṇaṃ parataḥ ||4||
 gatyardhe bhagaṇārdham
 deyaṃ liptācatuskaṣaṃyuktam (liptāś catuska°) ||
 śeṣapadasamāś cāṃśās
 taiś ca dhanarṇāt phalaṃ deyaṃ (datyaṃ) ||5||
 vyekapadam indriyaghaṇaṃ
 kṛtanavadaśasaṃyutaṃ viyuktaṃ ca ||
 manuvedayamebhyaḥ pada-
 guṇe triśaṣṭyuddhṛte (triśaṣṭyodhṛte) liptāḥ ||6||

1. "(One should) multiply (the *ahargaṇa*) by 4, add 6, divide (the sum) by 1461, and subtract (successively) 126 diminished (respectively) by 1, 0, 0, 0, 2, 4, 7, 9, 9, 8, 6, and 5."
2. "If one increases the *ahargaṇa* by 1936 and divides (the sum) by 3031, (the quotient) is (called) *ghanas*; if the remainder is multiplied by 9 and divided by 248, (the quotient) is (called) *gatis* and the remainder the *pada*."
3. Divide the *ghanas* by 16; put the remainder aside below; multiply it by 3 and divide it by 4; (the quotient) in signs and so on (is to be subtracted; add) minutes (equal to) twice the number of *ghanas* (and) 2 signs 9; 7, 1°; (the result) is (the longitude of the Moon) in signs and so on."
4. "The *gati*-s multiplied by 185 and diminished by $\frac{1}{6}$ of the *gati*-s are called the minutes. A half of a *gati* is 124 *pada*-s; it is positive (in the first half), negative in the other."
5. "In the (first) half of a *gati* one must give 180° plus 4 minutes. Take degrees equal to the *pada*-s or to the remainder (after subtracting 124); add to these the contribution from the positive or negative (halves of the *gati*)."
6. "Multiply by 5 the *pada*-s diminished by 1; add 1094 to it (in the first half) and subtract it (in the second) from 2414; multiply (each sum) by the *pada*-s and divide by 63; the results are minutes (of the longitudinal increment)."

Since the parameters and models that appear in these examples and in many other passages in the *Pañcasiddhāntikā* are **not** apparent in nature, but are the result of unique calculations by specific men, and since many of them occur in cuneiform and Greek texts, their origin

outside of India cannot be contested. Varāhamihira's errors and deficiencies in describing this material is most easily explained on the hypothesis that it was foreign to him also.

In my last example, in chapter XVII, which like the previous one is taken from Varāhamihira's summary of the *Vasiṣṭhasiddhānta*, the first two verses are based on the Babylonian period relation for Jupiter and the rest on a breakdown of that synodic period in a manner found in both Babylonian and Greek sources.

vicatustrimśad dyugaṇaṃ (vivatustrimśa dvigunaṃ)
nāḍibhis tāvatibhir api ca guroḥ ||
hṛtvā navanavadahanair
udayā labdhāḥ sthi<tā> divasāḥ ||6||
udayanavāmśān (udayaravāmśa) dattvā
dineṣu ṣaḍvargasaṅguṇe hy udaye (°saṅguṇair udayaḥ) ||
ekanavāgnicchinne
padam (vadam) iti sāṣṭādaśaṃ śeṣam ||7||
dinaṣaṣṭy<ā>mśā dvādaśa
khakṛtair vedāḥ kṛtāsvibhir dvau ca ||
saptāṣṭakena vakṛī
ṣaḍ bhāgāḥ (vargāḥ) ṣaṣṭitaḥ ṣaṭ ca ||12||
anuvakro 'ṣṭiyārka<n>(anuvakṛī ṣṭiyarkā)
dinārdhaśatena (dinārdhamatena) nava<ca> tato 'stamitaḥ ||
sthitvāśvam ekamāsaṃ (sthitvā saikaṃ māsam)
sphuṭodayo dyvantye māsasya (sphuṭodayāṣṭātaraṃ māsam [māsam
α]) ||13||

6. "For Jupiter subtract from the *ahargaṇa* 34 (days) and as many *nāḍī*-s and divide (the remainder by 399; the quotient is (the number of) its risings. The (remaining) days are put down."

7. "Add to (these) days $\frac{1}{9}$ th (of a day for every) rising. Multiply the (number of) risings by 36 and divide (the product) by 391; (the remainder) is called the *pada*. Add 18 to the remainder.

12. "In 60 days (Jupiter) traverses 12°, in 40 (days) 4 (degrees), and in 24 (days) 2 (degrees); (it moves) retrograde 6° in 56 (days) and 6 (degrees) in 60 (days);"

13. "In direct motion (it goes) 12 (degrees) in 80 (days); 9 (degrees) in 50 days; then it sets; staying (set it travels) 7 (degrees) in one month; its accurate rising is on the last day of the month (i.e., the 29th)."

Philology, Literature, Translation

by
Sheldon Pollock

1. Like a number of the people in this room, I suspect, I have spent much of my life translating.¹ Of course I'm thinking about the common-sense notion of translating, what Jakobson calls "translation as such", and not Steiner's notion that would equate all forms of linguistic interpretation with "translation". I translated from Latin to English in school, from Dutch and French and German to English (and Latin to Dutch) as a student in a Belgian *athenäum*, from Greek and Latin and Sanskrit to English in college; and as a scholar, in the study and in the classroom, from Sanskrit (occasionally from Hindi, and more recently, in a very tentative way, from Old Kannada) to English, but most of all, from Sanskrit to English, day after day. The Sanskrit at issue has been above all *śāstra* -- *alaṅkāraśāstra* and the classical *darśanas*, especially *pūrvamīmāṃsā* -- and *kāvya*, both later courtly materials and that "first" of Sanskrit poems, the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*; on the last of these I worked for four or five years and translated material that amounts to something like an *Odyssey*. All that said, this is one of the very few times I've spoken in a public gathering about the activity that fills the space of my days, and I've written about it only once.²

In fact, though translation was an activity that evidently filled the lives of my teachers as well -- many of them at this institution, Daniel Ingalls, Zeph Stewart, Cedric Whitman, John Finley, Glen Bowersock, G. P. Gould, and others; some of them in India, M. V. Patwardhan, Pattabhirama Shastri, Balasubrahmanya Shastri, who translated into Marathi, Hindi, and Tamil respectively) -- they never talked much about it either, or, so far as I know, wrote much about it. And why this should be so it is worth pausing to consider.

Translation as a discrete problem has typically been addressed by philosophers concerned with the higher-order, theoretical issues translation raises; linguists (and increasingly scholars of cognitive science and artificial intelligence) concerned with the psychological or mechanical or technological possibilities of translation; and, finally, poets and would-be poets, whose active conceptualization of translation and its challenges is entirely different from the first two, being concerned as they are with solving precisely the problem, that of the aesthetic

¹ What follows is the text of a talk given at the symposium "Translating, Translations, Translators. From India to the West" (Harvard University, May 1994). Although adding footnotes and amplifications, I have tried to preserve something of the character of the original oral presentation.

² *The Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, Vol. II: Ayodhyākāṇḍa*, Princeton, Princeton U. Press, 1986, pp. 74ff.

dimension, which the other two communities ignore, and thus with struggling to keep what is said to get lost in translation from getting lost. Although it underpins all their work, for historians and interpreters of political, social, cultural or literary formations linguistically different from their own, the problem of translation has long had the status of the proverbial family idiot in the attic: everyone knows he's there and impossible to deal with, but no one wants to acknowledge him or they won't be able to carry on with their daily business. And for this reason, too, translation is a problem that many of these scholars -- and here I include myself -- have come to view as intellectually barren: No one addressing translation ever has anything new to say that will improve translation as a practical activity, so unless we are interested in its philosophical, cognitive, or poetic dimensions, we might as well just forget it.

The worst case, of course, is when the philosophical pretends to impinge on practice. Years ago I had the privilege to attend a conference with George Steiner, whose landmark book, *After Babel*, had just been published. The entire panel of philosophers and theoreticians agreed that, yes, translation was really quite impossible. The fine translator from the Dutch, the late James Holmes, was there, and he looked at me, and I at him, in the secure knowledge that we were both going to go home and somehow do the impossible. Certainly for people who actually translate, translation as a metaphysical or even abstract aesthetic problem is banal, and I think that is why all my teachers -- who by in large were not philosophers, scientists, or poets -- ignored it to a man. For they knew then what I since learned: translation is as philosophically problematic, stylistically individual, and practically hard as life, and as we keep on living we keep on translating, with the inevitable singular imperfections that define being human.

2. What is not either theoretically or historically barren or banal is the history of translation regimes, both those in which we have come to operate in the modern academy, where a standard of linguistic truth in translation reigns, and earlier and possibly other regimes, especially those in which the texts were produced that scholars at this symposium are concerned with translating. The principal institutional location of most translation of premodern texts today is the university, and the forms of knowledge and protocols of discourse defined by the university have come to characterize academic translation. To some degree this is responsible for the non-experimental nature of such translation -- one cannot easily both be scholarly as well as aim to transform the English language through translation -- and the narrow reduction of possible translation regimes. Nothing like Pound's *Propertius* (probably happily) nor even Logue's more recent *Homer* (unfortunately) seems on the agenda of contemporary translators of Indian literary texts.

Both for the history of earlier translation regimes -- what it has variously meant in premodernity to transport a text from one language

into another -- and for another, non-banal question that relates to the history of translation viewed within the general history of the economies of cultural exchange, South Asia offers precious materials. Here we confront what is without question the most complex and historically densest network of multilingual literary cultures anywhere in the world - - and yet, it seems to me, virtually all of the crucial questions about the translational aspects of this network have never been unasked. Let me briefly catalog some of these questions and materials, however provisionally my ongoing work on historical cultural studies of premodern India allows me to do this.

One dimension of South Asian translation regimes I am tracking situates this activity within the general trade in cultural capital, where Sanskrit texts take their place along with other preciousities that India exported to the world. An instructive example here is offered by the legends concerning the translation of Sanskrit texts on statecraft into Persian. The following is recounted from *Kalila and Dimnah* (I summarize Keith Falconer's summary):

Nūshīrvān, king of Persian, having heard that there exists in India a book containing every kind of instruction, directs his vizier to find a man acquainted with "Indian" and Persian. The vizier selects Barzōye, who had earlier traveled to India to extend his knowledge of medicine and chemistry. The latter receives the order to procure the book, which is supposed to be in the library of the king of India. Arriving in India, he meets with great difficulties, but at last obtains not only the book he is seeking but also other works of great value. Barzōye labors day and night translating the book into Persian, fearing lest the king of India may ask for it back. This done, he returns home. A large assembly is convened, and the book is read aloud. It is universally acclaimed.³

The romance of the tale shouldn't obscure its factuality: the *Pañcatantra*, which is the text at issue, was translated into Persian around the end of the Sassanian period. Comparable if more intense is the translation of mostly Sanskrit Buddhist texts into Chinese, certainly the most massive translation program in all antiquity. Filliozat calculated that nearly 1700 texts were translated over a period of nine centuries, amounting to something like 40 million Chinese characters. But the market in the West is strong, too, from the time of the Sassanian king if not earlier, where among other things we find translations of scientific and spiritual texts into Arabic and Persian (the *Yogasūtra* itself, for example, or the numerous versions of a mystical text called the

³ Ion G. N. Keith-Falconer, *Kalilah and Dimnah or the Fables of Bidpai*, reprint Amsterdam, Philo Press, 1970), pp. XXI-XXII.

Amṛtakunḍa).⁴

A second regime relates translation to strategies of (usually surreptitious) incorporation. It is striking that, with the exception of astronomical literature translated from the Greek, those Sanskrit texts that are translations from another language never seem to acknowledge themselves to be so; the translation itself is an appropriation whose name cannot be spoken. A celebrated instance here is the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, which as Friedhelm Hardy has shown, is partially translated from the verses of the Tamil devotional poets.⁵ It is thus unsurprising that, unlike the world of Latin, for example, where a *translatio studii* took place not unlike what we find in the regional traditions of the subcontinent, there exists no Sanskrit or other Indian discourse on translation; in fact, there exist no common word for translation in any premodern Indic language. The IA term *anuvādayati* in this sense is modern; *parivatteti* appears occasionally in Pali texts (*Mahāvamsa* 37.175; 244),⁶ and (so far as I have discovered) once in a Sanskrit text, Rājaśekhara's account of the type of plagiarizer (one among the *śabdārthaharaṇeṣu kaviprabhedāḥ*) by whom "a poem is converted from one language into another", *anyatamabhāṣānibaddham bhāṣāntareṇa parivartyate*. The example Rājaśekhara gives is a very close, if slightly expanded, Sanskrit version of a *gāthā* from the *Sattasaī*:

necchāi pāsāsaṅki kāo diṇṇaṁ pi . . .
. . . -oggaliyavalayamajjhatthiaṁ piṇḍaṁ||
dattam piṇḍaṁ . . .
pāsāsaṅki galitavalayaṁ nainam āśnāti kākāḥ||

[Her fallen bracelet encircles the riceball, and the crow hesitates to eat, thinking there's a trap.]⁷

But this phonological transformation hardly constitutes "translation"; somewhat further along the continuum, now in the case of scientific literature, is a work like the *Kavirājamārga*. This rhetorical treatise was produced at the court of Nṛpatuṅga Amoghavarṣa, king of the

⁴ See Helmut Ritter (ed.), "Al-Bīrūnī's Übersetzung des Yoga-sūtra des Patanjali", *Oriens* 9 (1956), pp. 165-200; Bruce B. Lawrence, "The Use of Hindu Religious Texts in al-Bīrūnī's India with Special Reference to Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra", in *The Scholar and the Saint: Studies in Commemoration of Abu'l Rayhan al-Bīrūnī and Jalal al-Dīn al-Rūmī*, ed. Peter J. Chelkowski, New York, New York University Press, 1975, pp. 29-48. The *Amṛtakunḍa* is currently being translated by Carl Ernst, to whom I owe these references.

⁵ Friedhelm Hardy, *Viraha-bhakti*, Delhi, Oxford U. Press, 1983.

⁶ References courtesy my colleague Steven Collins.

⁷ *Kāvyamīmāṃsā*, ed. Dalal, Baroda 1934, pp. 66-67.

Rāṣṭrakūṭas at the end of the ninth century, by his court poet, Śrīvijaya. Its conceptual foundations, overall structure, rhetorical categories, definitions, and sometimes even exemplifications, are derived from the *Kāvyādarśa/Kāvyalakṣaṇa* of Daṇḍin (late seventh century; the work played a similar role in the later Sinhala, Tamil and Tibetan poetic traditions). Here is one example out of many, the illustrative verse for the figure *tattvāpahnavaṇarūpaka* or *rūpakāpahnuti*:

*naītan mukham idaṃ padmaṃ na netre bhramarāv imau |
etāni kesarāṇy eva naitā dantārciṣas tava ||* (*Kāvyalakṣaṇa* 2.94)
[This is not a face, it is a lotus, these are bees, not eyes,
these are filaments, not the gleaming of your teeth]

*vadanam idaltanburuham madalōlavilōcanamgaḷ allam ivaḷigaḷ |
mudam allidu vikaṣanam eṃbidaniṃbene bagege
rūpakāpahnutiyaṃ ||* (*Kavirājamārgam* 3.24).⁸
["This is not a face, it is a lotus, these are bees, not eyes wild with
lust,
and this not pleasure but a blossoming" -- an utterance of this sort
is called "metaphorical denial"]

It is of course especially interesting and important to determine those areas where the vernacularizing cultural politics of a court like that of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas found it important to deviate from, while incorporating, the cosmopolitan discourse of Sanskrit. But that is another story.

Another regime, closely related to the former, understands translation as ennoblement or communicative enhancement (it's not always clear which obtains). Important examples here would be Sanskrit versions of Prakrit texts where the antecedent is fully acknowledged. In some instances, of course, these are just full-scale applications of the translational impulse found in the *chāyā*, the Sanskrit "shadow" that came to be attached to many Prakrit verses in medieval India. I am currently studying the history of this latter practice, and its communicative context is complex. In the early eleventh century, for example, Bhoja never provides *chāyā*-s for any of the numerous Prakrit quotations in the *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa*, whereas Kṣemendra, his Kashmiri contemporary, seems always to do so, as in *Aucityavicāracarcā*. And certainly it is "communicative enhancement" that governs the production of something like the Sanskrit version of Pravarasena's *Rāvaṇavaha* that was prepared by one Śivanārāyaṇadāsa "at the command of Rāmasiṃha, during the time of Jahangir." But something different seems to be going on in the case of Jaina texts: the *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*, exists both in a Sanskrit version of one Jinasena (A.D. 783) and in Apabhraṃśa versions by Svayaṃbhu and Puṣpadanta (tenth

⁸ *Kāvyalakṣaṇa*, ed. Thakur, Darbhanga 1957; *Kavirājamārgam*, ed. Krishnamoorthy, Bangalore 1983.

century), though their relationships need to be established. But, to take another genre of text, the Jaina cosmographical work, the *Lokavibhāga*, exists now in a Sanskrit translation of a Prakrit original, dated to A.D. 458, that has long been lost (no doubt as a result of the existence of a Sanskrit version). One set of texts I am currently examining is the splendid eighth-century tale, the *Kuvalayamālā* of Uddyotanasūri, along with its (probably thirteenth century) Sanskrit version, the *Kuvalayamālākathā* of Ratnaprabhasūri, who says in his introduction,

*dākṣiṇyacihnamunipena vinirmitā yā prāk prākṛtā
vibudhamānasarājahaṃsī |
tām saṃskṛtena vacasā racayāmi caṃpūṃ sadyaḥ prasadya
sudhiyaḥ pravilokayantu || (1.10)*

[The Prakrit *campū* -- a royal goose upon the Mānasa lake that is wise readers --

made long ago by the great sage renowned for goodliness, I have rewritten in Sanskrit: may the learned but deign to glance at it.]

Ratnaprabha abbreviates, adapts, epitomizes, reworks, reproduces -- in fact, employs a wide variety of strategies for turning Uddyotana into Sanskrit, and thereby offers a whole trove of material for cultural theorization on the basis of the actual modalities of literary translation into South Asian languages.⁹

This fourth regime, that of modalities, in fact requires new and sensitive historical and cultural-theoretical reconstruction. What seems to be the dominant form of post-Enlightenment translation in the West, mimetic or word-for-word translation, is often said not to appear in India. We've already seen that, to some degree, this is not so; Sanskrit *alaṃkāra* works are translated into regional languages often with great exactitude, as are Prakrit texts into Sanskrit (or, earlier, and far rarer, Greek scientific works). Yet the distance between source and target language in these instances was often short, and the mode of translation -- as in the case of the Kannada rhetorical treatise -- often meant not the invention of a new *deśi* idiom but a new dialect, one of the many kinds of '*maṇipravāla*' that used *deśi* morphology and Sanskrit lexemes. New self-aware forms of translation scholarship do seem, however, to develop under new cultural conditions. During the time of the Sultanate, the court of Zain ul Ābidīn and his immediate successors in Kashmir witnessed a striking two-way cultural flow and new translational practices. I am trying now to piece together the cultural project of this court, one of whose driving forces on the Sanskrit side was the historiographer, anthologist, and savant, Śrīvara, who styled himself *yavanabhāṣāpāraṅgama* (expert in Persian). Sometime at the end of the

⁹ *Kuvalayamālākathā*, ed. Upadhye, Bombay 1970. See also the editor's introduction, pp. 92ff.

fifteenth century -- indeed, it must have been very soon after the original was composed (A.D. 1484) -- he partially translated, sometimes word-for-word, and partially adapted Jami's *Yusuf va Zulaikha* (or *Yosobhajolekhā*, as Śrīvara calls it) under the title *Kathākautukam*.¹⁰ In the Mughal period the norms that were meant to prevail are most vividly captured in Badāoni's account of the Persian translations of Sanskrit texts he helped to prepare at the court of Akbar: "A hundred *juz*" of the Persian translation of the *Mahābhārata*, for example, were "closely written, so exactly rendered, that even the accidental dirt of flies on the original was not left out."¹¹ The resulting text, called *Razm nāma*, represents, as Badāoni himself reports, the conversion of a "rough translation into elegant prose and verse," which was then compared "word for word with the original." How precisely the Persian stands in relation to the Sanskrit remains to be examined.

As for **exact** translation of Sanskrit **poetry** into South Asian **regional languages**, this does not appear to be a practice that captures wide cultural interest perhaps until British colonialism arrives. Providing texts for classroom use in modernizing educational institutions was one stimulus (and the texts were the predictable primers, *Hitopadeśa*, etc.). But also, and unparadoxically, with the rise of modernizing literary movements under the sign of colonialism and English education, poets sought to make their intellectual revolution -- to enhance the prestige of their languages, to reconfigure their literary history as part of their new national history -- by conjuring up the spirits of the poets of the past by means of *bhāṣā* translations of Sanskrit literature. The mid-nineteenth century saw the first Bengali translations of key Sanskrit dramas such as *Ratnāvalī* (1849) and *Śakuntalā* (1854), while later in the century, the same Hindi translator who first translated Shakespeare was the first to translate *Mṛcchakaṭika* and *Uttararāmacarita*.¹² Again, the procedures, standards, and purposes of these translations await detailed study.

A very different regime of literary "translation" was in place prior to these developments. All regional language "epic" poems, for example -- starting with Pampa's *Bhārata* (*Vikramārjunavijaya*) in the tenth century

¹⁰ See Richard Schmidt, *Das Kathākautukam des Śrīvara, verglichen mit Dschāmī's Jusuf und Zuleikha*, Kiel, C. F. Haeseler, 1893; Śrīvara's *Kathākautukam*, Kiel, C. G. Haeseler, 1898.

¹¹ *Ain i Akbari*, trans. H. Blochmann, Calcutta, Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1927, pp. 110ff, p. 111. fn. 2; *Muntakhab-Ut-Tawarikh*, trans. W. H. Lowe, Calcutta, Baptist Mission Press, 1884, Vol. 2, pp. 330; 366, and cf. 278, 302.

¹² Sisir Kumar Das, *A History of Indian Literature, Volume VIII: 1800-1910, Western Impact, Indian Response*, Delhi, Sahitya Akademi, 1991, p. 108; Harish Trivedi, "Reading English, Writing Hindi: English Literature and Indian Creative Writing", in Svati Joshi, ed., *Rethinking English: Essays in Literature, Language, History*, New Delhi, Trianka, 1991, pp. 191-92 (discussing the Hindi translator Lala Sitaram).

-- are of course far more justly to be styled retellings than translations in any sense (though a writer like Pampa knew his Vyāsa intimately). Indeed, one even might think there was some stricture on strictly "translating" such texts, if one is to believe such verses as the following:

aṣṭādaśa purāṇāni rāmasya caritāni ca |
bhāṣāyāṃ māṇavaḥ śrutvā rauravaṃ narakaṃ vrajet ||

(Whoever listens to the eighteen *purāṇas* or the *Rāmāyaṇa* in vernacular language will go to hell).¹³

At all events, exact translation of literary texts does seem to be either unknown or irrelevant to the cultural history of much of South Asia before colonialism. This applies to *laukika* texts, too. Here Sanskrit poetry provided important models and paradigms, no doubt, as is witnessed by such works as the *Andhrakumārasaṃbhava* or the *Karnāṭakakādambarī*, but these were typically not imitative translations. Counterexamples can be found, however; Janna's Jaina romance in Kannada, the *Yaśodharacarita*, adopted in 1209 from the tenth-century Sanskrit text of Vādirāja, uses as wide a variety of appropriation strategies as Ratnaprabha, including translation "as such."¹⁴

A final regime of translation would situate the practice squarely in the domain of power. This is perhaps more evident under western colonialism than for earlier periods. Vicente Rafael's recent study of Bible translation and conversion in Tagalog society under Spanish rule, shows well how this regime operates.¹⁵ Rather more tentative have been studies of literary translation and imperialism in terms of Orientalist and neocolonial constructions of India.¹⁶ And we have just begun to explore translation and contemporary politics movements in India. A striking case here is the recent Sanskrit translation of Tulsi *Rāmāyaṇa*, a text that sought originally to open up a vernacular space for the Rāma tale and

¹³ The verse is cited by Bhabatosh Datta in V. Raghavan, ed., *The Rāmāyaṇa Tradition in Asia*, New Delhi, Sahitya Akademi, 1980, p. 548.

¹⁴ T. R. S. Sarma, trans. *Janna, Tale of the Glory-Bearer*, New Delhi, Penguin Books, 1994, p. XII.

¹⁵ Vicente L. Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism*, Durham and London, Duke U. Press, 1993. This also provides a useful historical and real-world context for one of the more important theorizations -- if socially disembodied theorization -- of translation, that offered by Eugene Nida (developed under the auspices of the Bible Translation Society). Cf., for example, *Toward a Science of Translating*, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1964.

¹⁶ Dorothy Figueira, *Translating the Orient*, Albany, SUNY, 1991; see my comments in *Journal of Asian Studies* 1992, pp. 419ff; Tejaswini Niranjana, *Siting Translation*, Berkeley, U. of California Press, 1992.

explicitly rejected Sanskrit. Outside these instances of modernity we need to know what translation and power meant in the cultural politics of premodernity, and how translation mediated the great contests between cosmopolitan and regional cultural-political formations. We need to consider as well what does **not** get translated. It is a fact worth pondering that in the three-hundred year presence of the Greeks in Bactria and India, we can point to virtually no **literary** communication via translation. As Peter Green put the case more generally, "Of genuine literary interpenetration between Greek and other cultures there is virtually no trace. For one thing, literary translations -- as opposed to those of medical, mathematical, astronomical, or similar practical treatises -- seem to have been nonexistent, a sure sign of esthetic indifference."¹⁷ This may be, I suspect is, overstated for India,¹⁸ but there are important cultural-political limits to translatability. We don't quite understand these limits yet, nor what it is precisely that such incommunication was communicating.

3. It is probably fatuous to think that earlier or alternative forms of translation especially as these were developed in India can or should affect contemporary practices of translating Indian texts. What we were called here to address -- which, I take it, is translation as practical activity, as craft or skill -- seems in the contemporary academy, as I said, to be largely impervious to theoretical or historical intervention. This is not to say that craft or skill is not theory-drenched (and historically constituted), too; but much of the theory embedded in the skill of translation -- the ideology of canon, for instance, that makes the translator choose a given work for translation (or, as others would have it, whose very choice creates canonicity), or notions of linguistic meaning -- is not specific to or helpful for translation. When, for example, in his discussion of translation Derrida wants to explode the notion of a "transportable univocality" in the source text or target language and thereby the possibility of any transparent representation, the practical translator hears the useless chattering of one who never translates.

But if theoretical abstraction is irrelevant to translation, reflection on the practice is not empty, for translation can be done better or worse. I don't mean by this to imply that translation has a very interesting **independent** history as a skill -- at least it doesn't when two closely related cultural conditions are satisfied: first, when the source language is equal in cultural prestige to the target language, and second, when it is not normally accessible to speakers of the target language. When

¹⁷ Peter Green, *Alexander to Actium*, Berkeley, U. of California Press, 1990, p. 316.

¹⁸ At least I try to argue this in "Literary History, Indian History, World History," forthcoming in *Social Scientist*.

differential prestige between languages is present translation has additional tasks to perform that makes its history very interesting indeed (as in the "vertical translation" environment that marks the early history of Latin literary culture, or Kannada);¹⁹ as it does when the source language is fully accessible to speakers of the target language, for bilingual intellectuals translate not so much in order to communicate through translation as to make metadiscursive statements, for example, that the target language possesses the expressivity of the source language, or indeed, that the language exists as such as an independent communicative instrument.

That translation over the past four or five centuries does not have a very interesting independent history as a skill makes it quite unlike, say, the history of European (or middle-period Indian) painting, which could be described as a history of progress: a history of the conquest of visual appearances, something at which artists got better and better. As Arthur Danto puts it, "Painterly success up to Rousseau's time consisted in presenting the eye with an array of stimuli as identical as possible to those with which the real world would present it. The strategies for achieving this took a very long time to discover, as Ernst Gombrich has tirelessly demonstrated. . .".²⁰ (Of course, one could write a history of painting not as a history of development toward adequacy, but of changes in sensibilities of what "adequacy" is, as post-realist art shows, though this was possible, perhaps, only after the conquest of appearances had been achieved.)

In its history as a skill translation is more like the history of literature, which is not a history of "the systematic conquest of the appearance of things" and therefore not describable as a history of progress. Quite the contrary, in literary history, traditions typically celebrate the perfection of origins -- Homer and Vālmīki, Dante and Pampa -- whereas all later poetry in the tradition is thought to mark something of a decline. These may, of course, in some cases only be putative origins, but there is an undeniable if undefinable cultural power in such "first" works. So in the history of translation: readers typically find Golding's Elizabethan version of Ovid, like the King James Bible, far more powerful than any more recent version.

Where the history of translation (as product) differs from that of literature and indeed does describe a history of "conquest" is in its aspect as 'philology', which I would define as the disciplined historicization of textual knowledge. This is something that can improve, and so, in its philological aspect, can translation.

What this all means, I think (and here may be the reason my teachers

¹⁹ The distinction between vertical and horizontal that captures two different relations of cultural power is made by Gianfranco Folena, "'Volgarizzare' e 'tradurre'", in *La traduzione: saggi e studi*, Trieste, Lint, 1973.

²⁰ Arthur Danto, *State of the Art*, New York, Prentice Hall, 1987, p. 70.

and I rarely talk about translation as such) is that in those aspects that permit us to do anything historically important about it -- to do a more knowledgeable piece of work than our predecessors, so that we might come to describe translation as a history of progress -- translation is only a subset of philology, whereas it is more properly a subset of literature in those aspects that, for the most part, do not so permit us. If we want to think of it as a teachable skill and provide rules of action, as I proceed now to do, we have to keep in mind that there is little specific to translation as such in all this, distinct from, on the one hand, doing philology or, on the other, making literature.

4. In a narrower sense, there are features specific to Sanskrit poetry -- the topic I was asked to address in this talk -- that make understanding and translating it an activity subject to specific constraints, where conscious reflection and modest conceptualization do have some role to play. These constraints inform the principles -- very humble and often self-evident principles -- that I want to enunciate in the time remaining to me.

One of the most important of these constraints is philological respect for the long history of reading in South Asia itself, and the tradition of exegesis and appreciation it comprises. Respect for this history generates my first set of principles, primary among which is the following: **Medieval Indian readers (as concretized in their commentaries) can know more about their culture than we**, and must therefore be listened to. (This is not always-and-everywhere the case; few classicists would, I think, make similar claims for the Hellenistic commentaries on Homer.) These readers can be very far removed in time from the *mūla* text, and still have important contributions to make to our understanding. One small example: in the second book of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Kausalyā says to her son,

daśa sapta ca varṣāṇi tava jātasya rāghava |
atītāni prakāṅkṣantyā mayā duḥkha-parikṣayam || (2.17.26)

The ten years and seven since you were born, Rāghava, I have passed yearning to put an end to my sorrow.²¹

I have no doubt that the late medieval south Indian commentators on this passage are correct -- however *recherché* their view may strike us -- and that "born" here is used in the pregnant sense of "reborn, i.e., at the *upanayana* ceremony", which for *kṣatriya* boys takes place in their eight year. Rāma is thus twenty-five years old, and this is corroborated in other passages, which considered together make us realize that a certain argument in the narrative of the poem depends upon our appreciating a

²¹ All translations from the *Rāmāyaṇa* are from my volumes (Princeton U. Press, 1986, 1991).

signification recovered for us by the southern commentators.

It is worth noting that the NE tradition of the *Rāmāyaṇa* (Nepal and Bengal) somehow lost this interpretation, and sought ineptly to revise the text in other passages that correctly identify the hero's age (see my notes on 2.17.26 and 3.45.4). And this suggests to me a second principle of translation: **Medieval Indian readers can know less about their culture than we**, and therefore must be critically interrogated. (I am not unaware that such a principle, thus formulated, raises important issues in philosophical hermeneutics pertaining to the meaning of 'meaning', but these I ignore for now.) In the third book of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Rāvaṇa abducts Sītā and flies up with her into the clouds:

sā hemavarṇā nīlāṅgaṃ maithilī rākṣasādhipam |
śuśubhe kāñcānī kāñcī nīlaṃ maṇim ivāśritā || (3.50.21)

"Maithilī was golden skinned, the *rākṣasa* deep blue-black, and folded within his arms she looked like the star that glitters from within a sapphire."

The entire *Rāmāyaṇa* exegetical tradition has lost the meaning of the word *kāñcī* -- all extant commentaries and Sanskrit lexica take the word in its usual sense of "jeweled belt", which makes no sense whatever in the context. We can only recover the real meaning from the *Dhātupāṭha* on *kacī/kāci*, "*dīptibandhayoḥ*" (faintly remembered in the D1 variant *lekhā*).

Who "we" are ("Medieval Indian readers can know less . . . than **we**") brings me to another principle that lies somewhere between respect for past reading and trust in contemporary reading. It was the editor of classical texts, M. L. West -- breathing the spirit of Housman -- who remarked that editors cannot be trusted, and critical apparatuses are provided so that readers will not have to trust them. Here is an example of a passage that both the tradition and "we," meaning the editor of the critical edition, both failed to understand (I have discussed this elsewhere): the text is 2.63.4, as it is printed in the critical edition:

vādayanti tathā śāntim lāsayantī api cāpare |
nāṭakāny apare prāhur hāsyāni vividhāni ca ||

crit. app. ad loc.: ^a) . . . D4.5.7 *gāṃti* (sic) . . . For 4^{ab}, Śl, N2 VI B D1-2.6 M4 subst.:

1594* *avādayaṇ jaguś cānye nanṛtur jahasus tadā*

My note ad loc.: "The reading of the crit. ed. *śāntim*, has no syntactical relationship here. The commentators are forced to understand with it *uddiśya* ('in order to pacify him')... The correct reading, *gānti*, is preserved in D4,5,7. This was apparently misunderstood by the editor to be a corruption [expect *gāyanti*], but we now know that the form is part of the epic dialect: in *MBh.* 5.107.9c *gānti*

is correctly restored by the crit. ed." (and elsewhere in *MBh*). "It is, moreover, confirmed by the gloss in the NR, *jagus* (1594*). Note also the common collocation of singing, dancing, and playing music . . . as for example in 1.31.11, 2.85.33." Without knowing, and critically weighing, India's knowledges as well as modern scholarship, and striving for that right mix of humility and independence toward both, translation of Sanskrit poetry must fail.

My second set of principles moves beyond the philological and concerns the literary, and more generally cultural, aspects of literary translation. Here I feel far less secure in formulating even my banal imperatives, for there is a highly pragmatic dimension to the literary. As Richard Rorty might put it, literary translation can effectively be done in as many ways as there are purposes to be served, and be "evaluated according to their efficacy as instruments for purposes".²² Also determinative to some extent are audience and venue -- Princeton University Press as opposed, say, to Bantam books -- and expected longevity -- there is a new version of the *Gītā* every couple years (though still no one has gotten it quite right), whereas the critical edition of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, if for no other reason than its mass, will not be translated again into English in our lifetime. Thus readership and intended shelf-life have got to effect our aesthetic choices, and I therefore hear the qualifications of my principles even before I articulate them, but let me proceed nonetheless.

One of my literary-cultural principles is that, in Sanskrit poetry, **form is a value in itself**, and translation that fails to communicate this value fails as translation. Form bears, in fact, a certain content, a kind of meaning. The syntactically self-sufficient verse in which all of Sanskrit poetry is composed (retaining independence even in larger structures like *yamakas* and *kulakas*) is the rhythm of thought and narration, and cannot be collapsed without an almost semantic loss. Furthermore, the strictures especially on Sanskrit "lyric" verse, which is among the most highly conditioned verse forms in the world in view of the double constraint of syllabic count and quantitative weight, generate a substantial portion of the aesthetic impact of the poetry. What is important here is not only the patterns of expectation produced by the seriality and syntactic isolation of the verses, but by the achievement of expression within a self-imposed set of limitations. To open up or relax this form in the target language is to diminish the Sanskrit poet's victory.

Of course, here endless debate arises, for me best encapsulated in Robert Grave's (I think) remark that he always would prefer a live sparrow to a dead eagle. The force of this came home to me very perceptibly several years ago when I was editing the early and middle-period South Asian materials for the *Harper Collins World Reader*. The

²² Richard Rorty, "The Pragmatist's Progress," in Stefan Collini, ed., *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, Cambridge, Eng., Cambridge U. Press, 1992, p. 92.

English translations of Sanskrit poetry I find formally most faithless -- W. S. Merwin's -- were the biggest hit with the "focus-group" readers, whereas Daniel Ingalls's Victorian formalism, far closer to the Sanskrit though it was, fell flat. We're back to "purposes to be served," of course, and to the really quite futile discussions of beauty and fidelity that give translation discourse a bad name.

I should say, to set the record straight, that the decision to put the Princeton *Rāmāyaṇa* into prose, with which I didn't wholly agree, was dictated more by such considerations as the translators' own sense of their literary qualifications, their notion of the historicity of genres or the obsolescence of verse in the contemporary American literature. One could argue that the verse epic is long dead and to translate *Vālmīki* into poetry is to fail to understand that the prose novel is its contemporary formal equivalent. One could, on the other hand, point to Fitzgerald, Mandelbaum, Fagles, Pinsky, all translators of western "epics", for substantial counterevidence. When I was asked to translate the "Ajavilāpa", the eighth *sarga* of Kālidāsa's *Raghuvamśa*, for an anthology of poetry to be published by the Sahitya Akademi, I did try to honor this principle of form, not by anything so mechanical as a reproduction of the *vaitāliya ardhasamavṛtta* quatrain of the original, but by means of a loose three-line pentameter (a form that shows such vivacity in Derek Wolcott's recent "epic", *Omeros*):

Aja mourns:

"Strength is gone, joy vanished, music silenced,
springtime is dead, adornment has lost its charm,
and my bed is now forever empty.

"Wife, adviser, friend, and favorite pupil
in the secret arts of love -- when pitiless death
took you from me, what, tell me, did he leave?
....

"Perhaps still king, but hereby ends all joy
for Aja, nothing can ever move me again,
for all that gave pleasure was all to do with you."

And his *guru* consoles him:

"Death is the natural state, the wise concur,
and life an accident -- to draw a single
breath upon this earth is great good fortune.

"A lover's death is an arrow piercing the heart
for the ignorant man; for the wise, an arrow
extracted, an open door to highest bliss.

²³ Forthcoming in T. R. S. Sharma *et al.*, eds., *Anthology of Ancient Literature*, New Delhi, Sahitya Akademi.

repellent, an old hag. And yet, the god of love, who comes to life in our bodies, had taken possession of her, and so she addressed Rāma. . . .

If form and occasionally syntax present the contemporary translator of Sanskrit with challenges, there are other circumstances that, although the *Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa* itself does not present me with materials to demonstrate this, render translating Sanskrit poetry impossible. A good deal of this poetry is in fact an exploration of the very potentialities and capacities of the Sanskrit language; language itself becomes the subject of poetry, and the very proliferation of possible meanings in language becomes the principal meaning of the poetry. This impulse should not be seen, as it has always been seen, as a debility or a sign of "decadence" of later Sanskrit poetry. On the contrary, it is present at virtually the inauguration of the literature, in Aśvaghoṣa, for example (I'm thinking of such features as the poetry of grammatical forms in the second chapter of *Saundarananda*); it is found in moderate dimensions in Kālidāsa (for instance, in the *yamakas* of the ninth chapter of the *Raghuvamśa*), intensifies in Bhāravi and Māgha (as in the celebrated *ekākṣara* verse of *Kirātārjunīya* 15.14, *na nonanunno nunnono nānā nānānanā nanu*, etc.), and reaches its apogee in the *dviṣaṃdhāna* tradition -- which tells two stories simultaneously -- an old tradition that begins at the latest with Daṇḍin and achieves perfection in the great (and unjustly undervalued) work of Kavirāja, the *Rāghavapāṇḍaviya* (ca. 1190). This poetry, which for the translator constitutes the very horizon, the aporia, of translatability, is one of the great triumphs of Sanskrit, a stunning affirmation of its unfungibility with any other language in the world.

In the realm of "purposes to be served," it is very much worth keeping in mind that an important, perhaps basic and unifying, purpose all translation of Sanskrit poetry shares -- why in fact we would want to read Sanskrit poetry in translation at all -- is precisely that it is a version of **Sanskrit** poetry, and **not** American or English poetry. If translation transplants, nativizes, domesticates totally, why bother with it? For in that case a (potentially) radically different historical literary imagination and cultural project will have disappeared without trace, and we will have gotten nothing from the experience of reading Sanskrit poetry except the false idea that it is exactly like W. S. Merwin's poetry (where the comment the eighteenth-century classicist, Richard Bentley, is said to have made about Pope's Homer in heroic couplets -- "that it was a very pretty poem, but that he must not call it Homer" -- finds just reapplication). Whether or not my late colleague A. K. Ramanujan was reproducing "a nineteenth-century native response to colonialism," I do think Tejaswini Niranjana has a point when she argues that his translations of the *vacanas*, "try to show how [these medieval Kannada texts] are always already . . . 'modernist' and therefore worthy of the West's attention."²⁴

Let me emphasize, in conclusion, this real and important difference regarding **difference** in translating ancient Sanskrit poetry (as compared with translating, say, contemporary French or German poetry in the contemporary global ecumene), and repeat that it raises difficulties for which I have no simple answers. One of these is how to resist homogenization, to preserve difference and effectively defamiliarize the reader without at the same time "reproducing the Orient" as a failed, deformed, or ridiculous shadow of the West. Another is that this sort of ethnographic *Verfremdung* and aesthetic pleasure are often -- in practice, not by metaphysical necessity -- contradictory values. In order to address this second difficulty, the trick is to find the right compromise, and that is something I don't think can be reduced to rules, but rather consists in those countless micro-adjustments where philology and poetry push each other to their limits. To address the first, a new political-cultural value -- openness to heterogeneity -- is required. But of course in the production of this, through an unending dialectic, translation itself plays a crucial role.

²⁴ *Siting Translation*, p. 180.

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Translation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *Sampradāya*

by
Howard Resnick

I wish to discuss the process of translating the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* within the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*. I will first briefly mention some of the internal characteristics of the *Bhāgavatam*, the general religious history of India, its special importance for the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition, and then how Vaiṣṇavas, and especially Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, have approached the task of translating and transmitting sacred texts such as the *Bhāgavatam*. Since I did my own translation of the *Bhāgavatam* within the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition, this somewhat lengthy introduction is essential, I believe, to convey the cultural world in which I was operating.

The *Bhāgavatam* is one of the eighteen *Puṇ rāṇa*-s, and according to its own autobiographical data, it was composed by Veda-Vyāsa after that legendary sage had already divided the *Veda*-s and supplemented them with the epic *Mahābhārata*. The *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* is divided into twelve *skanda*-s or cantos, among which the tenth is celebrated for its 90 chapter narration of the life of Kṛṣṇa.

According to Professor Daniel Ingalls, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, as it is also known, "stands out by reason of its literary excellence, the organization that it brings to its vast material, and the effect that it has had on later writers."¹

Professor Winternitz has observed that the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* "is the one *Purāṇa* which, more than any of the others, bears the stamp of a unified composition and deserves to be appreciated as a literary production on account of its language, style, and metre."²

About the *Bhāgavatam*, Professor Daniel Sheridan states, "Three Vaiṣṇava schools, founded by Madhva, Vallabha, and Caitanya, view its teachings as authoritative. It is the main channel through which the stories and legends about Kṛṣṇa have entered the length and breadth of Hindu civilization."³

Sheridan goes on to point out that the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the principle text for the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, the followers of Śrī Caitanya. Indeed Caitanya's own teachings were based on the *Bhāgavatam*, as we

¹ D. Ingalls, "Foreword" in *Krishna: Myths, Rites, and Attitudes*, ed. Milton Singer, Chicago 1968, p. vi.

² M. Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature*, transl. S. Ketkar, N. Y. 1971, I, 556.

³ D. Sheridan, *The Advaitic Theism of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, Motilal, 1986, p. 2.

clearly see in Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja's highly revered *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, a near contemporary biography of Śrī Caitanya. There we learn that, upon being questioned by His famous disciple, Sanātana Gosvāmī, on the entire range of devotional, theological conclusions [*saba siddhānta puchilā* 2.23.115], Śrī Caitanya responded by giving all of the confidential conclusions of the *Bhāgavatam* [*Bhāgavata-siddhānta gūḍha sakali kahilā* 2.23.115], the clear implication being that the *Bhāgavatam*'s conclusions contain and illumine all of the fundamental religious truths. Let us look for a moment at the term *siddhānta*, as it is used in this exchange between Sanātana Gosvāmī and Śrī Caitanya. For those who are not Sanskritists, the term *siddhānta* is composed of two words; *siddha* and *anta*. *Anta* means 'end' and further conveys in Sanskrit the sense of 'conclusion, definite ascertainment, or certainty'. *Siddha* means, among other things: 'accomplished, fulfilled, perfected, sacred, illustrious', as well as 'admitted to be true or right, established, settled, proved.' Thus *siddhānta* indicates the 'established end or purpose', hence 'a demonstrated conclusion of an argument, a settled opinion or doctrine, a received or admitted truth.'

As in other systems of thought, including Western academics, so it is also true for Vaiṣṇava philosophy that a certain measure of free thinking, speculation, exploration, and discovery takes place within fixed boundaries. And it is precisely the *siddhānta*-s of a system which define and mark those lines beyond which one may not authentically transit. In the Vaiṣṇava tradition, and specifically in the *Bhāgavatam*, this dynamic interaction between respect for boundaries, on the one hand, and personal realization on the other, is made explicit. For example we have the following statement of Sūta, the famous reciter of the *Purāṇa*-s, who is describing to an assembly of sages his encounter with his *guru*, Śuka:

"O sages, there as the saintly sage was speaking, he of abundant splendor, therein I was seated and I too understood by his mercy. I shall tell it now to you, by the text, and to my best judgment" [*tatra kīrtayato viprā viprarṣer bhūri-tejasaḥ, ahaṁ cādhyagamaṁ tatra niviṣṭas tad-anugrahāt, so 'haṁ vaḥ śravayiṣyāmi yathādhītaṁ yathā-mati*].⁴

Let us focus on the last words of this statement: "by the text, and to my best judgment." The Sanskrit terms are, respectively, *yathādhītaṁ* and *yathā-mati*. First, *yathā-adhītaṁ* means literally 'as read or studied', and thus indicates 'strictly according to the text'. In contrast to this term is *yathā-mati*, 'according to one's judgment or opinion'. The first term invokes discipline and fidelity, the second personal insight and freedom. It is my contention that the clue to the Vaiṣṇava presentation of *śāstra*, whether in translation or commentary, and whether Gauḍīya or other, is found in the two pregnant terms, *yathādhītaṁ* and *yathā-mati*, which are juxtaposed here by Sūta. Śrīdhara Svāmī, whom Śrī Caitanya accepted as the most authoritative commentator on the *Bhāgavatam*, glosses these terms as follows: "[Sūta's narration will be] *yathādhītaṁ*, according to

the text, rather than a flashy presentation of his own realization [*na tu sva-mati-vilasitam*]. But even so, the term *yathā-mati* [indicates that he will speak] according to his own realization [*tatrāpi yathā-mati sva-maty-anusāreṇa*] [but in this sense; Sūta means to say] 'I will explain extensively that which was spoken in summary [by my guru] [*saṅkṣepataḥ kathitaṁ vistarataḥ śrāvayiṣyāmi*]."

Thus to be considered authorized within the *Vaiṣṇava-sampradāya* a translator must correctly ascertain the *siddhānta* of a sacred text, and indeed of a sacred tradition, and then explain it, expand it, embellish it, according to his/her own realization, but within the framework of the *siddhānta*.

Now, to make clear how the *Vaiṣṇava* community keeps a firm grasp on their *siddhānta*, we must touch briefly on the institution of *paramparā*. The Sanskrit word *paramparā* literally means 'a succession; one after the other', and is found in the fourth chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. There Lord Kṛṣṇa declares that He originally spoke the knowledge of *yoga* to the sun-god Vivasvān, Vivasvān spoke to Manu, and Manu to Ikṣvāku, and that this chain of teaching in succession is known as *paramparā*. For the Gauḍīya *Vaiṣṇavas*, these verses of the *Bhagavad-gītā* not only define a primeval process through which genuine spiritual knowledge is transmitted, they authorize and require the continuation of the process now and in the future. Within what modern scholars call historical *Vaiṣṇavism*, such figures as Rāmānuja, Madhva, and Caitanya acted as *ācārya*-s, spiritual leaders who teach by their *ācāra*, or personal conduct, and in recent times Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and Bhaktivedānta Svāmī are widely accepted as holding the same exalted status. For the Gauḍīya *Vaiṣṇavas*, the Puranic speakers headed by Kṛṣṇa, together with the *ācārya*-s, constitute a single chain of *paramparā*, a succession of teachers and students. Each *bona fide* student in the chain is considered to have faithfully repeated the words of his teacher, even if not *verbatim*. A *Vaiṣṇava* must accept and repeat the words of the *paramparā* teachers in order to be recognized as a member of the *sampradāya*, the authorized spiritual community. Similarly, only a proven member of the *sampradāya* will be eligible to represent the *paramparā*.

My thesis here is that the *Vaiṣṇava paramparā* exhibits a special notion of translation or transmission of sacred texts, and that this is the case both in Puranic time and in times that are non-controversially historical. Further this special sense reveals much about the inner workings and essential philosophy of the tradition. For example we may consider the work of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura who acted as the great *ācārya* of the Gauḍīya *Vaiṣṇava* community during the first three decades of this century. In addition to establishing over sixty branches of his Gauḍīya Maṭha throughout India, and even in London, he wrote and lectured extensively, refused an academic chair at the University of Calcutta, and translated the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from Sanskrit into Bengali with commentary on each verse. His most

prominent disciple, my own teacher, Śrīla Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who spread the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava movement throughout the world, translated most of the *Bhāgavatam* into English, again with commentary on each verse.

The translations and commentaries of these two individuals bear the unmistakable mark of a masterful insight into the language and content of the *Bhāgavatam*, yet their translations show limited concern for the type of fussy literalism that often marks the academic approach. Clearly the Vaiṣṇava ācārya-s understand their mandate as translators in a way which differs from academic norms. What is going on here?

We shall begin to answer this question by considering the Vedic and Puranic phenomenon of the structural frame. To give but a few examples, ritual *pūjā*, the worship of God or the gods, is framed by acts of calling the Deity, entertaining the Deity, and finally bidding the Deity farewell. Similarly, as Dr. Witzel often points out, the structure of Vedic fire sacrifice is most usefully viewed as a frame. And in the case of elaborate sacrificial rites, complex arrays of ritual components are often inserted as sub-frames, situated within a ritual "main-frame."

Within the *Bhāgavatam* we may say that a particular *guru*-disciple relationship constitutes a type of frame. This is significant for our topic since the teaching of the *Bhāgavatam*, both within the text and by later teachers, translators, and transmitters, almost invariably takes place within a *guru*-disciple relationship. The *guru*-disciple frame functions as follows: the disciple first approaches and honors the *guru*, the *guru* then enlightens the disciple by teaching him or her the *Bhāgavatam*, and finally the enlightened student renders grateful service to his or her teacher and begins a new life as a God conscious individual. Such a successful spiritual transmission serves as a link in a continuous chain of teaching. In the *Bhāgavatam* we witness this process in action. For example, upon being questioned by Śaunaka, Sūta will sometimes say that a similar question was once posed to his *guru* Śuka. Suddenly we are taken back to the banks of the Ganges, where the saintly King Parikṣit, cursed to die in seven days, poses a similar question to his teacher, Śuka. Śuka may then answer the question, or indeed he may recall that his own father, Veda-vyāsa, asked a similar question to Nārada, and in an instant we are eye-witnesses to that encounter, which may resolve the original inquiry, or, conceivably, we may be referred further up the chain of *paramparā*, as Nārada remembers posing the very question at hand to Lord Brahmā, creator of the cosmos. And so it goes. Of course, at times, Brahmā states that he once asked that question of Nārāyaṇa, the Lord Himself, who may give the answer or recite yet another story in which another sage actually answered the question. Usually, we will not move through so many levels in a single narration. The picture I have just given is unusually elaborate, but I think the point is clear. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* teaches *paramparā* not only in theory, but in action.

The teachings of the current ācārya constitute a theological main-frame, for the ācārya presents within his teachings the real essence of all

the previous *ācārya*-s. For the current Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *saṁpradāya*, the translations and commentaries of Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda constitute the living main-frame of the tradition. In the understanding of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, the great *ācārya*-s go beyond literal translation and treat the Sanskrit text exactly as Sūta treated the words he heard from Śuka, or as Śuka dealt with the message he received from his father, Vyāsa, or as Vyāsa "translated" the words of his *guru*, Nārada. If we recall the terms *yathādhītaṁ yathā-matī*, we could say that those who thoroughly realize the essence of the text enjoy a proportionately greater freedom to express their realizations. At the same time it is noteworthy that both Bhaktisiddhānta and Bhaktivedānta included in their published translations a word by word translation of the original text so that the explicit, literal, surface sense of the text is open for public inspection.

An explanation of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *paramparā* would be incomplete without some mention of Śrīdhara Svāmī who, according to Sheridan, wrote his commentary to the *Bhāgavatam* around 1325. Śrī Caitanya's deep respect for Śrīdhara Svāmī's interpretation of the *Bhāgavatam* is well illustrated in a celebrated incident that took place during Caitanya's stay at Jagannātha Purī. Vallabhācārya is reported to have proudly proclaimed to Śrī Caitanya that he, Vallabha, had written a commentary on the *Bhāgavatam* which surpassed that of Śrīdhara Svāmī.⁵ Indeed, Vallabha claimed that Śrīdhara Svāmī "explains according to the circumstances" and is, therefore, "inconsistent in his explanations" [3.7.114]. Śrī Caitanya, playing upon the fact that the word *svāmī* can mean either a *saṁnyāsī* or a husband, responded that one who does not accept the *svāmī*, i.e. the husband, is a prostitute [3.7.115]. Śrī Caitanya then told Vallabha:

"Śrīdhara Svāmī is the spiritual master of the entire world because by his mercy we can understand *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. I therefore accept him as a spiritual master" [3.7.133].

Similarly, Jīva Gosvāmī writes at the beginning to his *Bhāgavatam* commentary, the *Krama-sandarbhā*:

"I worship the feet of Śrīdhara Svāmī, for they are the sole guardian of *bhakti*. [My own commentary is meant to explain] either that which the venerable Svāmī did not make manifest, or things which are manifested but unclear."

We have discussed the vital role of *siddhānta* and *paramparā* in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition, the special role of Śrīdhara Svāmī, and the all-pervading theological and spiritual significance of the *Bhāgavatam* in that tradition. Let us briefly review a few of the specific ways in which the Gauḍīya tradition utilizes the *Bhāgavatam*.

The *Caitanya Caritāmṛta* declares that the confidential essence of the *Bhāgavatam* is equal to *saba vaiṣṇava dharma*, the totality of Vaiṣṇava

⁵ CC Antya-līlā, Chapter 7.

religious principles.⁶ For the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, it is the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that clearly and consistently establishes the supremacy of Kṛṣṇa as the original form of the Godhead. Thus when the *Bhāgavatam* declares *kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*, "... Kṛṣṇa is the Lord Himself",⁷ the Gauḍīyas take this statement to be the *Bhāgavatam*'s *mahā-vākya*, or principal teaching.

Finally, I will tell an anecdote that illustrates well the feelings of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas toward the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In 1972, while resting in Los Angeles, Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda once told me about his first arrival in America in the Boston Harbor in 1965. He was 69 years old, had never been outside of India, and had no one waiting to greet him. In his words, "As I walked down from the boat I did not know whether to turn left or right. I had no money. But I was not worried. I was confident because I brought with me the *Bhāgavatam*." Indeed, Prabhupāda had brought within the hold of the cargo steamer that carried him to America 200 complete trilogies of his translation, with commentaries, of the first canto of the *Bhāgavatam*. As he spread the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement throughout the world, Prabhupāda continued to translate the *Bhāgavatam*. But when he passed away in 1977, his work was left incomplete, although he left behind an instruction that his disciples should finish the translation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* with commentary based on the previous *ācārya*-s. I had the unique privilege of inheriting that instruction. With the blessings of Śrīla Prabhupāda, and the help of my spiritual colleagues, I was able to complete 111 chapters of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. I did so within the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*, according to its traditional standards of authentic religious scholarship.

Upon beginning this task, however, I soon came to realize that since I was clearly not one of the great *ācārya*-s, but at best a faithful servant of my *guru*, it would be mere imitation for me to claim the same authority and freedom in translating the text. I felt constrained not only by the *siddhānta*, the theological conclusions of my tradition, but also by the literal sense of the text. Of course, I gladly accepted the guidance of Śrīdhara Svāmī, for again, as the *Caitanya Caritāmṛta* states: "*prati-śloke prati-akṣare nānā artha kaya*". "In each verse of the *Bhāgavatam*, and in each syllable, there are various meanings".⁸

It is apparent by now that the bulk of my discourse has concerned itself with the most basic notions of translation, as transmission, within the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition. It was in fact Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *paramparā* which largely determined the course of my work. For the most part, the translations which I effected with the invaluable assistance

⁶ *Bhāgavatam-ādi śāstrera yata gūḍha marma*. (CC 1.7.48)

⁷ *ŚB* 1.3.28

⁸ CC 2.24.318

of my colleagues, has been well accepted by the Vaiṣṇava community, both in India and throughout the world. Although I have alluded to it today, a detailed discussion of the exact reasons for which the *Sampradāya* has recognized these books as authentic is a topic for another day.

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A translation of the *Ṣaṭtriṃśattattvasaṃdoha*

by
Debabrata Sensharma

Introductory remarks

The *Ṣaṭtriṃśattattvasaṃdoha* is a very popular Sankrit text that deals with the theory of cosmogony according to the Advaita Śaiva school of Kashmir. The Sanskrit text consists of two parts: one, the metrical part containing 21 verses in *āryā* metre extracted a work named the *Saubhāgyasudhodaya*, also known as the *Subhagodaya*, *Prapañca* (Chapter) I, verses 28-48 by Amṛtānandanātha; two, a commentary on the verses by Rājānaka Ānanda. The *Saubhāgyasudhodaya* is a larger text divided into six *prapañca*-s or chapters which discusses a variety of subjects. The commentator Rājānaka Ānanda Kavi selected 21 verses dealing with the nature of 36 *tattva*-s constituting the entire range of creation of the Universe. In a lucid language, he added his exposition of purport of the *kārikā*-s in his commentary called the *Vivaraṇa*. He also gave a new name, *Ṣaṭtriṃśattattvasaṃdoha* (lit. 'Essence of the thirty-six *tattva*-s') to the text.

The author of the material portion Amṛtānandanātha belonged to the Tripurā school of the Śākta tradition, which is the cognate school of the Advaita Śaiva school of Kashmir. In the concluding chapter of his work, the *Subhagodaya*, he has given his preceptorial lineage that consists of names of many divine teachers (*divyauḥa* and *siddhauḥa*) and some human teachers (*mānauḥa*). He puts himself at the fifth place in the lineage of embodied human teachers beginning with Mitreśanātha. He himself was a disciple of Puṇyānandanātha and probably flourished in the 12th century A.D. He was a prolific writer as is obvious from his authorship of as many as eight works. Some of his well-known works are the *Saubhāgyasudhodaya* (original work), *Cidvilāsastuti* (a devotional poem), *Yoginīhṛdayadīpikā*, *Vāmakeśvara Tantraṭikā* (commentaries), *Candrasaṅketa*, and the *Tripurisundarikālpa*.

About the age and the identity of Rājānaka Ānanda Kavi, there is some difference of opinion among the scholars. Raghavan in his *New Catologus Catalogorum*¹ has listed as many as four Rājānaka Ānanda living in Kashmir in different periods of time. The earliest Ānanda was the father of the famous *siddha* Somānanda, the founder of the Pratyabhijñā tradition, who flourished in the 9th century A.D. None of his works has come down to us. The second Ānanda was the brother of the famous Kashmiri poet Bilhaṇa and probably lived in the 11th century A.D. The third Ānanda was a Buddhist poet, and the fourth Ānanda a śaiva writer. He was the author of the *Vivaraṇa* commentary on the *Ṣaṭtriṃśattattvasaṃdoha*. He is said to have written a commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā*, called the *Ānanda Vardhinī*, another

¹ Vol. II, pp. 96-97.

commentary on the *Naiṣadhiya-Carita*, and another commentary on Mammaṭa's *Kāvya Prakāśa*, called the *Nidarśana*.

Since he is said to be a contemporary of Rājānaka Ratnakaṇṭha (1648-1681) his date may be fixed in the second half of the 17th century. Dr. Stein supports this date.

Now begins the *Ṣaṭtrimṣattattvasaṃdoha*

(Verse 1)

As the Supreme Lord, the embodiment of the Absolute [*anuttara*, lit. 'beyond whom there is none', i.e. the Absolute] vibrated [i.e. moved] out of His own free will to manifest the entire universe, His first vibratory movement is called the Śiva *tattva* by those who know the truth.

(Commentary)

Here in the Svatantra-Śivādvya school² is described the Supreme Lord, who is free (*svatantra*) and who is of the nature of the pure massive consciousness (*cidghana*); who, being always sportive (*kriḍanaśīla*) etc., is the doer of five functions (*kṛtya-s*) -- [His] sport consisting in the [manifestation] of all the *tattva-s* exercising His own Śakti, known as the divine freedom (*svātantrya*). [The *tattva-s* are only His self-reflections or *parāmarśa*]. Beginning with the Śivatattva and extending upto the *pṛthivī tattva*, constituting different spheres of Creation (*bhuvana-s*), He manifests through them [the *tattva-s*] a succession in the form of cause-effect relationship (as it were); looking from the supreme point of view, there is the absence [in reality] of the succession (*kramāsāhitya*) in the manifestation of the universe which is nothing but a mode of self-manifestation (*ābhāsa*). [Although] indescribable (*anākhyātve'pi*) by His very nature, he causes [His own] self-manifestation as the *tattva-s* like the Śiva etc. to appear in Himself as the background (*svātmabhittau*) out of His free Will (*svecchayā*).

[Yet] inspite [all] this, He does not forsake (*nojjhati*) His absolute nature, the state of massive Blissfulness (*ānandaghanāvasthā*), by manifesting the entire range of thirty-six *tattva-s* which are only His divine Glory (*svacamatkāravimarśa*) in the form of the entire universe. In order to make others [i.e. the readers] understand the real significance of all this, a follower of the great Lord [Maheśvara],³ a recipient of the divine Grace of the Supreme Lord, describes the *tattvakrama* [logical sequence in the manifestation of the *tattva-s*] through twenty one verses in *āryā* metre.

The desire of the Supreme Lord, who is of the nature of the Absolute, for creating [manifesting] the universe that exists within Himself as identified with His pure massive Illumination (*prakāśasvarūpa*) out of

² I.e. Advaita Śaiva school.

³ His name was Amṛtānanda Yogī, the author of the verses extracted from the *Saubhāgyasudhodaya*.

His own free Will with Himself as the background, [which can be explained better] on the analogy of a city [manifesting] in a mirror, is the first stage towards His self-manifestation; this has been designated as the *Śiva tattva*. [The Supreme Lord being possessed of] five *śakti*-s,⁴ [His] creation of the *tattva*-s out of [His own] free will is the self-manifestation in the pure realm (*śuddha adhvan*) with one of His five *śakti*-s such as the *cit* etc. dominating, one by one, [on each level of *tattva*-s]. The *tattva*-s like the *māyā*, the *vidyā* etc. [on of the five *kañcuka*-s or cloaks for self-concealment], being different-cum-non-different from Paramaśiva who is of the nature of massive Illumination-Consciousness (*saṃvitprakāśa-ghana-paramaśivāt*), only the divine Freedom (*svātantryameva*) has been assigned the supreme place in the manifestation of and the absorption (*viśvotpattisamharaṇāḍau*) etc. of the universe. [In this manner the Supreme Lord] possessing infinite number of *śakti*-s identified with His nature (*anantaśakti-niyamānam-kroḍīkā-ritvāt*), does not deviate from His essential nature [as the Absolute] in the manifestation of Himself as the infinite variety of *tattva*-s [which are only His self-manifestations in different forms] in exercise of His divine Freedom.

(Verse 2)

The *icchā* (divine Will) is the pure *śakti* which is ever inherent in Himself, and which is the seed of the entire animate and inanimate universe, existing in Himself as identified with Himself.

(Commentary)

His *icchā śakti* (divine power of Will), which is identified with Himself, is of the nature of the divine Freedom, and that holds within Himself [the Supreme Lord] the entire creation to be manifested later, in seminal form (*bijabhūta*) is verily the *Śakti tattva*. Although the *Śakti* (divine Power) is said to be the attribute of the *Śaktimān* (possessor of divine Power), yet according to us, it is not different from the *Śaktimān*, unlike in other schools of thought. The *icchā śakti* (the divine power of Will) is pure [in this stage] on account of being devoid of [the touch of] *kriyā* [the divine power of Action], hence in our school it is called by various names such as the 'heart', *vimarśa*, *sāra* (essence), *ūrmi* (wave), etc. [This stage represents] Parameśvara (the supreme Lord) in his *Śakti* form due to the manifestation of His divine glory (*aiśvarya*) in the form of *Pūrṇa Aham* (Supreme I-Consciousness). The *ānanda śakti* (the divine power of Bliss) dominates on this level.

(Verse 3)

Permeating the universe that is one with Himself, and which has manifested out of His *icchā śakti* (divine power of Will), He [the Supreme Lord] is called the Sadāśiva who, residing on that level, always

⁴ *Cit*, *ānanda*, *icchā*, *jñāna* and *kriyā*.

dispenses divine Grace to all.

(Commentary)

[This stage of the] supreme Lord's [self-manifestation represents] the Sadāśiva *tattva*, in whom the universe, called the *sat* (pure Existence) and the pure consciousness as its substratum is manifested by Him in exercise of His divine Freedom. In the universe [epitomised by the term] *Idam*, which is hazy [on that level] like the picture just revealed, the *icchā śakti* (divine power of Will) dominates. In order to make the existence in different forms manifest, [He] exercising His free will in the form of divine Sport, assumes the role of Sadāśiva [always] dispensing the divine Grace.

(Verse 4)

Experiencing the entire universe in the form of the *Idam*, the supreme Lord becomes [i.e. manifested Himself as] the *Īśvara* [*tattva*] in the succeeding stage. [Again] in the following stage, He becomes the *śuddha vidyā* [which is characterised by] the experience of the [essential] unity of the *aham̐tā* and the *idam̐tā*.

(Commentary)

By manifesting the entire universe distinctly in gradual steps, which has the pure consciousness as its substratum, and by "sprinkling" the same with the *Aham* (I-consciousness), He assumes the role of the *Īśvara tattva*. The *jñāna śakti* (the divine power of Knowledge) is said to dominate as the entire range of objects of knowledge is manifested clearly on that level. The level of the Sadāśiva *tattva* is the one that is characterised by the dominance of the intrinsic state [nature], while the level of *Īśvara tattva* is characterised by the dominance of the extrinsic state [nature] in somewhat different form; this is their basic difference.

When the *idam̐tā* [this-consciousness] shines distinctly as different [from the *aham̐tā*, the I-consciousness] and the *aham̐tā* (I-consciousness) also shines in such a manner that there is equilibrium, as it were, between two pans of an evenly held scale, then the *śuddhavidyā tattva* is manifested. The universe then is manifested distinctly on that level, hence the *kriyā śakti* dominates on that level. On all these [steps] the pure *svātantrya* [the divine Śakti called the divine Freedom] is in fact manifested in the different forms. These forms are therefore called the pure Way or Realm (*śuddha adhvan*).

(Verse 5)

Māyā is the [cause of the] experience of differentiation in all *jīva*-s (the fettered beings) manifested from Himself [by the Supreme Lord]. Just as the shore holds on or obstructs [the vast expanse] of the ocean, she [the *māyā*] also obstructs the manifestation of the supreme Lord's unfettered glory.

(Commentary)

Assuming the role of Aghora Śiva in the form of Mantramaheśvara and in order to perform the divine sport of [his] self-concealment, the supreme Lord manifests in the impure Realm (*aśuddha adhvan*), in succession as well as in a moment as it were, the inanimate and the animate creation beginning with *kalā* (*tattva*) and ending in [hierarchical order] the *ākāśa tattva* for the enjoyment of [experience by] the spiritual monads (*aṇu*) who are different from Himself [the supreme Lord, i.e. they experience themselves as different from the supreme Lord] as well as [mutually different] from another, by operating the *māyā śakti* that is capable of accomplishing the most difficult task.

There is [on this level] the experience of all inanimate objects as [mutually] different [from one another as well as from percipient subject] despite their being a part of the percipient subject [in essence] as it were. This level is the *māyā tattva* on which the *māyīya mala* causes the [experience of the] differentiation [in the percipient subjects], and by which [the *māyā śakti*] the divine Freedom of the supreme Lord is obstructed in the same way as the waves of the ocean are obstructed by the shore.

(Verse 6)

Having become limited in form, with all His powers contracted by her (*māyā śakti*), the supreme Lord is [i.e. manifests Himself as] this *puruṣa*. He is [then] like the sun becoming red at the eventide, and His power [of shining] contracted in such a manner that he is hardly able to reveal Himself [by shining freely].

(Commentary)

Without undergoing any change in essence when He, who is of the nature of pure consciousness, becomes devoid of [His] Śakti due to the contraction of His *śakti*-s, He is reduced to monadic form in which He is synonymous with the *puruṣa* [i.e. he is called the *puruṣa*]. [Then] He having His Śakti contracted and being of nature of contracted [i.e. self-contracted] soul or spiritual monad, is unable to recognize His own [divine] Glory and therefore continues to transmigrate from one life to another.

[And again], when due to difference in the intensity of the divine Grace (*śaktipāta*) [received by Him], he is made aware of his divine Glory [by the true spiritual knowledge], he begins experiencing the entire universe as his own part and parcel, and then he attains Śiva nature while remaining in mortal frame.

(Verse 7)

His *śakti*-s are many, consisting of complete [unfettered] autorship etc., but on his becoming contracted [i.e. limited], they [i.e. the Śakti-s] become limited in the form of *kalā* and the rest, and thus make him [spiritual monad] as *puruṣa*.

(Commentary)

Due to His non-difference with the divine Freedom (*svātantrya śakti*), which holds within her [divine Śakti's] bosom innumerable *śakti*-s, the supreme Lord is said to be endowed with the *śakti*-s in innumerable forms. When He [the supreme Lord] assumes contraction, all His *śakti*-s become limited and take the form of five (*kañcuka*-s), e.g. *kalā* etc.

They [His *śakti*-s expressing His divine Glory] are Omnipotence, Omniscience, Self-contentment, Eternity, and divine Freedom. These [His *śakti*-s] are again of two kinds, pure and impure; those related to the supreme Lord [constituting His integral nature] are pure, while those that pertain to the [mundane] world are impure.

(Verse 8)

When [His] omnipotence, getting contracted, is reduced to the [limited] power, capable of accomplishing only a few things, and thereby reduces Him [the supreme Lord] to the state of limited authorship, it is called the *kalā*.

(Commentary)

Owing to the [self-created] concealment of His [real divine] nature [resulting in the obstruction of His powers] (*śakti*-s), the omnipotence of the supreme Lord, who has [voluntarily] assumed the role of limited subject (*parimita pramātā*), takes the form of the *kalātattva*, consisting of limited authorship (*kiñcit kartṛtva*) during the involutory movement. The spiritual monad (*cidaṇu*) becomes capable of doing only limited things due to this [voluntary self-contraction], and that too not in all places.

(Verse 9)

His [the supreme Lord's] power of omniscience on becoming contracted [thereby assuming the limited] capacity for knowing only a few things and generating knowledge [of limited kind], is called the *vidyā tattva* by the wise men of olden times.

(Commentary)

His [the supreme Lord's] omniscience, on becoming limited, takes the form of the *vidyā tattva*, producing knowledge of only limited objects. The *bhāva*-s (ideas) reflected in the mirror of the intellect (*buddhi*) are mutually differentiated by the *vidyā* because the distinction between different objects cannot be made by merely enumerating their characteristic features. It is therefore held that one object is differentiated from another by the *vidyā tattva*.

(Verse 10)

His other *śakti* consists in eternal total contentment; the same (*śakti*) on becoming contracted, and ever attaching him to the enjoyment of objects, takes the form of the *rāga tattva*.

(Commentary)

The power of eternal total contentment of the supreme Lord, when it becomes contracted, takes the form of desire expressed in the form 'This is mine'. It then centres round some desirable object resulting in the development of a general attachment towards it (the object of desire), and it is called the *rāga tattva*. There develops specific attachment (*viśeṣa-abhiśvaṅga*) when it grows in extent as it were, and this is due to the *kalā* and *vidyā tattva*-s to some extent which have been described above.

(Verse 11)

That *śakti* of the supreme Lord, who is called Eternity, when going down i.e. on becoming limited and producing the appearance or birth and disappearance or death [of the subject and the objects of experience], should be regarded as the *kalā tattva* that always causes limitation [of the subject and the objects] in regulated manner.

(Commentary)

The *śakti* called Eternity of the supreme Lord, who is unaffected by the Time, on assuming contraction and joining the [self-limited] spiritual monad with time through the manifestation of succession is called the *kāla śakti* [a kind of *kañcuka*]. It also generates the feeling of agency (*kartrtva*) in the spiritual monads unrelated to the objects. Such particular spiritual monads become subject to time (*kāla*), which is expressed in and through their movements and through the succession of material objects.

(Verse 12)

That *śakti* of the supreme Lord called Freedom and none other, when becomes contracted subjects Him [the supreme Lord] perforce to guidance and regulation (*niyamanti*) in restricted manner as to what is to be done and what must not be done [by Him]; [this] is called the *niyati tattva* [one of the five *kañcuka*-s or cloaks veiling the supreme Lord's divine powers].

(Commentary)

The divine Freedom of the supreme object i.e. the supreme Lord, when becoming contracted, manifests itself in the form of the *niyati tattva*, whereby regulation or order in what constitutes the cause and whateffect is created, resulting in a particular cause getting related to the particular effect. In this way, order or regulation is created in the creation.

When the supreme Lord is veiled by such sheaths (*kañcuka*-s) like *kalā* etc. [described above], He experiences Himself bereft of all His divine powers (*śakti*-s) and fallen from the divine Glory due to [His association with] the *kalā* etc. He then becomes limited and is called *paśu* [fettered being].

(Verses 13-14)

The group of three *śakti*-s beginning with *icchā* (will), *jñāna* (knowledge), and *kriyā* (action) [is called] the *śāntā śakti* that when contracted in the form of edited [subdued] *icchā* (will) etc. becomes the equipoise of the *sattva* etc. [*rajas* and *tamas guṇa*-s] as it were.

When the *buddhi* (intellect) etc. [rest] in the nature (*svarūpa*) of that *tattva*, which is the equilibrium [of the three *guṇa*-s or *śakti*-s] in the form of the *citta*, it is called *prakṛti tattva*. His [the supreme Lord's] *icchā* (will) is in the form of *rajas*, *guṇa*, and the *ahaṁkāra* (egoity) is that which is responsible for the experience of ego.

(Commentary)

His [the supreme Lord's] *śāntāśakti* is of the nature of the aggregate because she has in her bosom the *śakti*-s like the *icchā* (will), *jñāna* (knowledge), and *kriyā* (action) in the state of equilibrium (*akṣobha*). This *śakti*, when contracted, is called the *prakṛti tattva* [on the lower plane] that denotes the state of equipoise of the three *guṇa*-s.

The manifestation of the *guṇa*-s follows from the three *śakti*-s beginning with the *icchā* (will) etc. [The *guṇa*-s] are threefold; it is from the disturbed state in the equipoise of the *guṇa*-s that the creation from the *prakṛti tattva* takes place. The intellect (*buddhi*), egoity (*ahaṁkāra*), and mind (*manas*) rest in the state of equilibrium of the *citta*.

In the manifestation of the *tattva*-s and the group of the subjects (*pramātā*-s), beginning with the Śiva down to *sakala* (embodied beings), the *jñāna* and the *kriyā śakti*-s (powers of knowledge and action) are the chiefs causes. When they [the two *śakti*-s of *jñāna* and the *kriyā*] are about to assume contraction, they are named as the *īśvara tattva* and the *śuddhavidyā tattva* [respectively]. When they [the two *śakti*-s] are actually contracted, they manifest themselves as the *vidyā* and the *kalā tattva*-s [the two *kañcuka*-s]. And when they are extremely contracted, they assume the form of instruments of knowledge or *jñānendriya*-s and the instruments of action or *karmendriya*-s respectively.

The five gross elements (*bhūta*-s) and the five subtle elements (*tanmātra*-s) should be understood to signify the zenith of the contraction of the *kriyā śakti* (power of action). The *icchā śakti* in the monadic soul producing the sense of egoity in the form 'I am' is the *ahaṁkāra* produced under the influence of the *rajas guṇa*.

(Verse 15)

The *jñāna śakti* (knowledge as power), which is of the nature of the *sattva guṇa* [one of the three constituents of the *prakṛti*] is the *buddhi* (intellect). It is the cause of determinate cognition. His [the supreme Lord's] *kriyā śakti* (Power of action) is of the nature of the *tamas* [another constituent of *prakṛti*], which takes the form of the *manas* (mind) responsible for ratiocination (*saṅkalpa-vikalpa*).

(Commentary)

The *jñāna śakti* (knowledge as power) assumes the modified form of the *sattvaguna*, which is manifested as the *buddhi* (intellect) and is of the nature of determinate cognition [i.e. production of determinate cognition in respect of an object is its distinguished feature]. The *kriyā śakti* (Power of action) is of the nature of darkness and is [i.e. it is manifested as] the *manas* (mind) that has ratiocination as its function.

(Verse 16)

The Lord, who has fivefold forms beginning with Vāmadeva [i.e. who manifests himself on the lower plane of wordly creation in fivefold forms, namely Vāmadeva, Īśana, Aghora etc., each having one of the five kinds of his *śakti*-s dominating] when He assumes contraction, manifests himself as different kinds of objects [here objects refer to the different kinds of senses] characterised by the dominance of the *jñāna* and *kriyā śakti*-s.

(Commentary)

Playful that He [the supreme Lord] is, when He, having five-fold forms such as Vāmadeva, etc. [in which He manifests Himself] assumes contraction, He takes the form of the *jñānendriya*-s (organs of knowledge), and their objects of knowledge owing to the preponderance of the tinge of the *jñāna śakti*, and also the form of *karmendriya*-s (organs of action) and their operation due to the dominance of the *kriyā śakti* [in them]. The *karaṇa*-s (organs of knowledge and action) each are five-fold on account of the five-fold nature of the *śakti* as their material cause.

(Verse 17)

The organs of knowledge are the *śrotra* (hearing), the *cakṣu* (seeing), the *sparśa* (touch), the *jivhā* (taste), and the *ghrāṇa* (smell). The subtle elements (*sūkṣmabhūta*-s or *tanmātra*-s) are the *śabda* (sound), *sparśa* (touch), the *rūpa* (form), the *rasa* (taste), and the *gandha* (smell) [all these are the objects of knowledge].

(Commentary)

The organs of hearing etc. are the organs of knowledge, and the subtle *bhūta*-s, like the sound etc., are the *tanmātra*-s (subtle elements).

(Verse 18)

The Lord of the *bhūta*-s [i.e. Śiva] also assumes gross form (*nikriṣṭa*) through His self-manifestation as five *bhūta*-s (gross elements) viz. the *ākāśa* (ether), *vāyu* (air), *tejas* (fire), *jala* (water), and the *pṛthivī* (earth).

(Commentary)

Due to the Lord's assuming extreme [self-]contraction in the form of matter, the five gross elements, like the ether etc., are manifested.

(Verse 19)

The objects of knowledge grasped through the sense-organs, like that of hearing etc., are the sound (*śabda*) etc. They are the instruments of knowledge of other objects, the instrument of speech is the *vāk* and the sense-organ hands are the instruments for receiving.

(Commentary)

The sense-organs, like the sense of hearing etc., are the instruments of cognition of objects like sound etc.; the motor organs like *vāk* etc. are the instruments of motor activity like speech etc.

(Verses 20-21)

The motor organs, like the feet (*pāda*) etc., are the instruments for the group of three beginning with movement (locomotion), excretion, and enjoyment. The earth has the smell as the distinguishing characteristic, water as natural fluidity, fire as hot touch, air as formless touch, and sky as sound.

I [the author Amṛtānanda Yogī] offer my salutation to the Lord Śiva who is of the nature of *kula* [the repository of the infinite number of divine *śakti*-s] and at the same time, beyond *kula* [the family of *śakti*-s].

(Commentary)

The word *ādi* (etc.) here [in this context] signifies the organs of excretion and enjoyment. The smell is the distinguishing characteristic of the earth, the natural fluidity of the water, the hot touch of the fire, the formless touch of the air, and the sound of the ether. In this way the chief characteristic of each *tattva* has been indicated. A hierarchical relationship of pervader and pervaded exists in them, the earth being the most pervaded and the thirty-five *tattva*-s, beginning with the water rising upto the Śiva *tattva*, being the pervaders. In this manner, the qualities of the ether etc., being the pervaders permeate in the levels of creation [below] on the level of gross matter (*bhūta*-s).

The Parama Śiva [being at the apex of the hierarchy of pervasion] exists on all the levels of creation. Therefore, He is both of the nature of the universe and the transcendent Absolute, both at the same time, and also of the nature of *kula* [the divine *śakti*-s]. And it is this aspect of His nature that is the object of achieving the union with Him [as the supreme Being] by his devotees. This has been indicated briefly through the author paying his obeisance to Him.

Here ends the *Ṣaṭtriṃśattattvasaṃdoha* together with the *Vivaraṇa* commentary by Rājānaka Ānanda.

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**Abhinavagupta's *Gītārthasaṅgraha*:
One Meaning, One Meanings, Many Meaning or Many Meanings?**

by
Arvind Sharma

1. Over a decade ago I translated Abhinavagupta's commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā* as part of my doctoral work and in doing so I am sure I tore the living heart out of the Sanskrit text in my ruthless march towards my degree. So if I now propound the thesis that every translation suffers from a deficit of meaning compared to the original, I am only reflecting my own sense of inadequacy in this respect, just as when I say that every translation constitutes a betrayal of the text in some sense, the statement is self-reproach veiled as a universal verity. But enough of self-flagellation. In an age in which necrophilia, bestiality and masochism are rampant, why flog a dead horse?

The point I wish to raise in the course of this presentation was not even an issue in my mind when I attempted a translation of Abhinavagupta's commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā*¹ and I have absolutely no idea whether it is wise, or otherwise, to raise it. But as Professor Witzel and Professor Garzilli have presented me with a unique opportunity by directing me that I take the **experience** of translating it as my point of departure, I am happy to do so. The issue I would like to raise is this: what bearing does the semantic status of any text in the general corpus of a religious or cultural tradition have on its translation into another language? I know the question, as it stands, is rather nebulous - but I hope that its contours will become at least clear, if not sharp, as we proceed. Allow me to take the first step towards concretizing it by focusing on a specific text, the *Bhagavadgītā*.

2. One of the interesting points about the *Bhagavadgītā* is that it simultaneously occupies two spaces in the Hindu tradition: a philosophical space as well as a cultural space. That is to say, it forms part of the triple canon of Vedānta, along with the *Upaniṣad*-s and the *Brahmasūtra*-s, known as the *prasthānatraya*. This is what I mean when I say that it occupies a philosophical space. But as part and parcel of the epic *Mahābhārata* it also occupies a cultural space. In fact the *Mahābhārata*, though less unhesitatingly than the *Rāmāyaṇa*, has even been classed as a *kāvya* as we shall see later. In any case, it is widely regarded as an *itihāsa* and as one of the two national epics of India.

The question I would now like to raise is: is this text (or any Hindu sacred text for that matter) meant to be univalent or multivalent? Is it supposed to possess only one (preferably correct) meaning or is it supposed to possess many meanings?

What do I mean when I say whether it is supposed to possess one

¹ A. Sharma, tr., *Abhinavagupta Gītārthasaṅgraha*, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1983.

meaning or many meanings? I have the following point in mind in raising this question; namely, what is the **presupposition** in this respect? For instance, one could maintain that a text has only **one correct meaning** in principle, although in practice there may be no unanimity among scholars as to what that correct meaning is. This understanding also carries with it the implication that **parts of the text** may be capable of being interpreted in more than one way, so long as the overall semantic unity is not compromised. As an illustration allow me to cite Śaṅkara's gloss on *Bhagavadgītā* XVIII.41 wherein the four *varṇa*-s are described as the product of *svabhāva-prabhavaḥ guṇaiḥ* (according to the strands that spring from their inner nature). Śaṅkara asks, after stating that the castes involve division: by what standard are they divided? And he goes on to say: "According to the qualities (*guṇa*-s) born of nature. Nature (*svabhāva*) is the Īśvara's *prakṛti*, the Māyā made up of the three *guṇa*-s. It is in accordance with the *guṇa*-s of the *prakṛti* that duties -- such as serenity and the like -- are assigned to the Brāhmaṇa-s, etc. respectively. **Or to explain in another way:** the source of the Brāhmaṇa's nature (*svabhāva*) is the *guṇa* of *sattva*; the source of the Kṣatriya's nature is *rajas* and *sattva*, the latter being subordinate to the former; the source of the Vaiśya's nature is *rajas* and *tamas*, the latter being subordinate to the former; the source of the Śūdra's nature is *tamas* and *rajas*, the latter being subordinate to the former. For, as we see, the characteristic features of their nature are serenity, lordliness, activity, and dullness respectively. **Or to interpret yet in another way:** nature (*svabhāva*) is the tendency (*saṃskāra, vāsanā*) in living beings acquired by them in the past births, and manifesting itself in the present birth by way of being ready to yield its effects: and this nature is the source of the *guṇa*-s, it being impossible for the *guṇa*-s to manifest themselves without a cause. The assertion that nature (*saṃskāra, vāsanā*) is the cause (of the *guṇa*-s) means that it is a kind of specific cause. The duties, such as serenity, are assigned to the four classes in accordance with the *guṇa*- of *sattva, rajas* and *tamas*, which are brought into manifestation by their respective natural tendencies, and which lead to those duties as their natural effects."² It is clear that three possible interpretations have been provided. It is also clear that they are not contradictory, though they are different.

The principle of unitary meaning then allows for two possibilities: (1) The existence of differences of opinion regarding what this unified body of meaning is in relation to a text and (2) differences in interpretation within the text, so long as they do not go beyond the orbit of this unified meaning.

A contrary example, in which the presupposition consists of the fact that the text or expression has **more** than one correct meaning is

² A. Sharma, *The Hindu Gītā: Ancient and Classical Interpretations of the Bhagavadgītā*, London, Duckworth, 1986, pp. 248-249. Śaṅkara cited as translated by A. Mahadeva Sastry. Emphasis added, diacritics supplied.

provided by the typical if trivial case of a pun (paronomasia), or to use a term more appropriate to this discourse, *śleṣa* as a figure of speech. A more striking example of this class would be the epic such as the *Rāghavapāṇḍvīyam* of Dhanañjaya (eighth century), which simultaneously narrates the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*.

3. To turn to the issue on hand then: is the *Bhagavadgītā* then **meant to be** univalent or multivalent? We noted earlier that it occupies both a philosophical space and a cultural space. The question therefore needs to be refined further: (1) is it supposed to be univalent or multivalent in its philosophical context and (2) is it supposed to be univalent or multivalent in its epic or cultural context?

The *Bhagavadgītā*, as part of the Vedantic tradition must then first be placed in the context of the Vedic tradition by hermeneutically reversing the famous traditional saying: the *Veda*-s should be explained in the light of the *itihāsa* and *purāṇa*-s (*itihāsapurāṇābhyām vedam samupabr̥mhayet*). Perhaps then the *itihāsa* such as the *Mahābhārata*, wherein the *Bhagavadgītā* finds a place, **could also be explained with the** help of the *Veda*. While attempting this hermeneutical reversal, however, it may be useful in the present context to distinguish between the Vedic and the Vedantic positions in this regard. I use the word Vedic here to comprise the *Samhitā*-s and the *Brāhmaṇa*-s, especially the former. In a recent work on Vedic hermeneutics, Professor K. Satchidananda Murty has presented the Vedic position on this point clearly and succinctly as follows:

From ancient times the Veda has been interpreted in many ways. The following three of them are considered important:

The ritualists (*Yājñikas*) have taken the Veda as mainly a source book which informs how to perform rituals for obtaining this-worldly and other-worldly good. They have gone to the extent of maintaining that there are no statements of facts (*bhūtārthavākyas*) in it. From this standpoint the entire Upaniṣadic portion becomes just an *arthavāda* to the commands enjoining acts of meditation conducive to the production of mundane and heavenly benefits, and the gods mentioned in it because hypothetical, i.e., entities supposed to exist. It may be said that Sāyaṇa's *bhāṣya* is mostly (not certainly wholly) a ritualistic interpretation as it was primarily meant for the *yājñikas*. So is Skandasvāmī's.

There have also been Vedic interpreters down the ages who accepted the Vedic gods as realities, and rituals as acts of propitiation and worship. This means for different purposes different gods have to be worshipped in different ways and certain gods propitiated so that they may not cause harm. This is the polytheistic interpretation of the Veda. It may be argued that Veṅkaṭa-Mādhava's *bhāṣya* tends to be an example of this kind of

interpretation. Most Western interpretations are also of this kind. The Veda has also been interpreted monotheistically. For example, Yāska in the *Nirukta* (VII. 4. 8, 9) says that all the gods mentioned in the Veda are the limbs of the one Great Self: *Ekasyātmāno'nye devāḥ pratyāṅgāni bhavanti*. Śaunaka's *Bṛhaddevatā* (1.61-65) agrees with this.³

The reference just made to Yāska enables us to strengthen this argument in two ways: (1) the view presented above is that of Yāska. But Yāska himself cites: "The views of the grammarians (*vaiyākaraṇa-s*), the young and old ritualists (*yājñika-s*), the euhemerists (*aitihāsika-s*) who took recourse to legendary lore for the explanation of Vedic stanzas, and the ascetics (*parivrājika-s*). The etymologists (*nairukta-s*) are invoked twenty times".⁴ Moreover, (2) Śaunaka's *Bṛhaddevatā* points out: "What it considered the shortcomings or errors of Yāska. Yāska, for example, interprets the phrase '*pañcajanāḥ*' as the four *varṇa-s* (castes) and the Nīśādas, the *Bṛhaddevatā* informs us that it is possible to understand it in other ways also, e.g.: (1) the five fires, (2) the four chief priests and the *yajamāna* (sacrificer), and (3) the eye, ear, mind, speech and breath. It says the spiritualists accept the third meaning".⁵ In other words, the Vedic tradition allows for preference but not exclusion. It is multivalent. This point has been recognized in relation to the *Veda-s* with sufficient clarity both in classical and modern Hinduism. For instance, Durgācārya, the Vedic exegete who came after Skandasvāmī and Uvaṭa, but preceded Sāyaṇa, writes thus, after stating that *mantra-s* can be interpreted ritualistically (*ādhyājñika*), theistically (*ādhidāivika*) or spiritually (*ādhyātmika*): "Therefore from these mantras as many meanings as possible, all of them indeed, may be derived; there is nothing wrong in this".⁶ Harking to the earlier tripartite division, "A Puraṇic text says that there are three meaning in all the *Veda-s* (*trayo'rthāḥ sarvavedeṣu*): (the well-known Agni, Fire, etc., the One God within them and the spiritual)".⁷ Closer to our own times, S. Radhakrishnan remarked in 1926: "The Vedas bring together the different ways in which the religious-minded in that age experienced reality and described the general principles of religious knowledge and growth. As the experiences themselves are of a varied character, so their records are many-sided (*viśvatomukham*)" which Jayatīrthā in his

³ K. S. Murty, *Vedic Hermeneutics*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1993, pp. 9-10.

⁴ V. S. Agrawala, "Yāska and Pāṇini", in *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Calcutta, The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, 1958, Vol. I, p. 294.

⁵ K. S. Murty, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

Nyāyasudhā interprets as "suggestive of many interpretations (*anekārthatām*)."⁸ Thus the *Gītā*, if treated as a Vedic text, is **supposed** to be multivalent.

The Vedantic tradition, by contrast, is univalent, vide *Brahmasūtra* I.1.4. *Ta tu samanvayāt*. In other words, the result to be aimed at is the harmony of the different scriptural statements.⁹ In fact S. Radhakrishnan even ventures the opinion: "Today the *samanvaya* or harmonisation has to be extended to the living faiths of mankind."¹⁰

The influence of the Mīmāṃsā doctrine of *ekavākyatā* on Vedānta is quite apparent here. V. K. Chari sums up the Mīmāṃsā logic succinctly in this respect: "Semantic autonomy, impersonality and unity of meaning are the three pillars on which the *Mīmāṃsā* theory rests."¹¹ Śaṅkara, in his Introduction to the commentary on the *Gītā*, says that as the several existing explanations of the *Gītā* "appear to teach diverse and quite contradictory doctrines (*atyantaviruddhānekārthatva*), I **propose**, therefore, to write a brief commentary with a view to determine its precise meaning".¹² Interestingly Abhinavagupta does not claim to offer its precise meaning. He claims rather to uncover its hidden meaning.¹³ Presumably, however, there is only one hidden meaning in accordance with the esoteric tradition. Śaṅkara's attitude in modern times is reflected by B. G. Tilak who wrote:

In short the book must not be read devoid of its context. This is especially true about a book like *Bhagavad Gītā*. Various commentators have put as many interpretations on the book, and surely the writer or composer could not have written or composed the book for so many interpretations being put on it. He must have been one meaning and one purpose running through the book, and that I have tried to find out. I believe I have succeeded in it, because having no theory of mine for which I sought any

⁸ S. Radhakrishnan, *The Hindu View of Life*, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1927, p. 15. The reference is to Jayatīrtha (1365-1388) and his *Nyāyasudhā* on Madhava's *Anuvyākhyāna* (see K. H. Potter, comp., *Bibliography of Indian Philosophies* Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1970, Vol. I., p. 230).

⁹ S. Radhakrishnan, tr., *The Brahma Sūtra: The Philosophy of Spiritual Life*, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1960, p. 246.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

¹¹ V. K. Chari, *Sanskrit Criticism*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1990, p. 193.

¹² A. M. Sastry, tr., *The Bhagavadgita with the commentary of Sri Sankaracharya*, Madras, Samata Books, 1985, p. 4.

¹³ A. Sharma, tr., *op. cit.*, p. 101.

support from the book so universally respected, I had no reason to twist the text to suit my theory. There has not been a commentator of the *Gītā* who did not advocate a pet theory of his own and has not tried to support the same by showing that the *Bhagavad Gītā* lent him support.¹⁴

Thus the *Bhagavadgītā*, as a Vedantic text, is presupposed to be univalent.

Now we may face the next question: is the *Bhagavadgītā* meant to be a univalent or a multivalent text as part of the *Mahābhārata*?

This involves us into the vexed question of the nature of the *Mahābhārata* itself. To a certain extent, however, our task is facilitated by the indigenous tradition in this respect, although anachronistically. The famous Vedantin, Madhvācārya, who flourished in the thirteenth century, comes to our rescue, through the remarks he makes in his *Mahābhāratatātparyanirṇaya*. The title is perhaps significant, given the significance attached to *tātparya* in Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta in determining the meaning of a text. Madhavācārya "commenting on the verse of the three beginnings" (I. 1. 50) writes:

The meaning of the *Bhārata*, in so far as it is a relation of the facts and events with which Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the Pāṇḍavas are connected, is *āstikādi*, or historical. That interpretation by which we find lessons on virtue, divine love, and the other ten qualities, on sacred duty and righteous practices, on character and training, on Brahṃā and the other gods, is called *manvādi*, or religious and moral. Thirdly, the interpretation by which every sentence, word or syllable is shown to be the significant name, or to be the declaration of the glories, of the Almighty Ruler of the universe, is called *auparicara* or transcendental.¹⁵

The cue provided by Madhavācārya is developed in our own times by V. S. Sukthankar, the initiator of the critical edition of the *Mahābhārata*, who took up this idea to explain the three planes on which it (the *Mahābhārata*) must be understood in its complete meaning. "On the mundane plane, the story deals with the realistic account of a fierce fratricidal war of annihilation with its interest centered on the epic characters. On the ethical plane, the war is seen as a conflict between *dharma* and *adharma*, good and evil, justice and injustice, with the final victory of *dharma*. On the transcendental plane, the war is fought between the higher and the lower self of humanity." He goes on to say:

¹⁴ A. T. Embree, ed., *The Hindu Tradition*, New York, Random House, 1972, p. 311.

¹⁵ K. K. Klostermaier, *A Survey of Hinduism*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1989, p. 78.

"Arjuna, the superman under the guidance of Kṛṣṇa, the Super-self, emerges successful in this conflict, after he has destroyed with the sword of knowledge the ignorance embodied in his illegitimate desires and passions symbolized by his relatives, teachers, elders and friends ranged on the other side. In this interpretation Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the *Paramātman*, and Arjuna the *Jīvātman*. Dhṛtarāṣṭra is a symbol of the vacillating ego-centric self, while his sons symbolize in their aggregate the brood of ego-centric desires and passions. Vidura stands for *Buddhi*, the one-pointed reason, and Bhīṣma is tradition, the time-bound element in human life and society."¹⁶

This trend is reflected in Abhinavagupta's commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā*¹⁷ but I must move on to make a point much more directly related to Abhinavagupta, namely, the conferral of the status of a *kāvya* on the *Mahābhārata* by Ānandavardhana on par with the *Rāmāyaṇa*, as in the following passage:

Furthermore, when in a complete work one presents a single flavor as predominant, it fosters freshness of meaning and abundance of beauty. If you ask for examples, we point to the *Rāmāyaṇa* or the *Mahābhārata*. For in the *Rāmāyaṇa* the First Poet [Vālmīki] has set forth *karuṇa* [the compassionate flavor] as the *rasa* by making such statements as "Grief was made into verse", and he has carried it through by composing his work so as to extend to the final separation [of Rāmā] from Sītā.

Likewise in the *Mahābhārata*, **which has the beauty of a *kāvya* while being in the form of a *śāstra***, the great sage [Vyāsa] has demonstrated that the creation of *dispassion* is the principal purport of his work, by composing a conclusion that produces a despondent feeling in response to the sorry end of the Vṛṣṇis and the Pāṇḍavas, and in doing so he has suggested that what he intended as the principal subject of his poem is the peaceful flavor [*śāntarasa*] and the human aim characterized by liberation [*mokṣa*].¹⁸

If the *Mahābhārata* is in some sense a *kāvya* and if the *Bhagavadgītā* within it participates in that dimension of it, then the question of whether *kāvya* is meant to be univalent or multivalent in the Hindu aesthetic tradition is no longer irrelevant in relation to the *Gītā*. According to this tradition great literature possesses a pleroma of

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ A. Sharma, tr., *op. cit.*, pp. 102, 104, 214, etc.

¹⁸ G. A. Tubb, "Śāntarasa in the *Mahābhārata*", A. Sharma, ed., *Essays on the Mahābhārata*, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1991, pp. 175-176, emphasis added.

meanings.

4. The discussion thus far may be summarized before we proceed further. The question we asked was: is the *Bhagavadgītā* to be considered a univalent or a multivalent text within Hinduism. We found that the answer depends of how it is contextualized. If it is contextualized as a philosophical text then the answer would depend on whether we viewed it as a Vedic or a Vedantic text. If it was viewed as a Vedic text the presupposition was that it is multivalent. If the *Bhagavadgītā* was viewed as a Vedantic text the presupposition was that it is univalent.

If the *Bhagavadgītā* was contextualized as a cultural text then the answer depended on whether it was viewed as an *itihāsa* (or an epic) or as *kāvya* (or as an epic poem). If viewed as the former, the presupposition was that it was multivalent. If viewed as the latter, the presupposition was that it might be even more so.

5. The analysis now needs to be complexified by introducing the polymath Abhinavagupta into the discussion. The clarifying question to ask here is: of the three foundational texts of Vedānta, why did Abhinavagupta choose to comment only on the *Gītā*, and that too with relative brevity? In the concluding verses of his commentary he refers to a person Loṭaka by name and states that he was prompted by him to write the commentary (*loṭakakṛtacodanāvaśataḥ*).¹⁹ Some have contended that this was his only reason for writing it, namely, feeling "pressurized by his relative".²⁰ S. Sankaranarayanan, however, disregards this explanation of J. L. Mason and M. V. Patwardhan as inadequate, and points out that "no other teacher of the Kashmir Śaiva school seems to have held the *Bhagavadgītā* in such high esteem".²¹ Abhinavagupta refers to the *Bhagavadgītā*, for instance, as *ādisiddhasūtra* in his *Īśvarapratyabhijñānavivṛtivismarśiṇī* (I.5.2).²²

So Abhinavagupta's choice of the text remains to be explained. S. Sankaranarayanan, who produced an independent translation of the text in India soon after I had completed mine as we pursued our separate vocations in geographical isolation, suggests two reasons for this choice. He begins by noting that the *Āgama*-s are esteemed as highly as the *Veda*-s in the school of Kashmir Śaivism, of which Abhinavagupta is the preeminent expositor. He also points out that according to the Śaiva Agamic tradition "The Vedic tradition is no doubt a good one; but it is inferior to the *Vaiṣṇava* tradition (which is itself inferior to the Śaiva

¹⁹ S. Sankaranarayanan, ed., *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā with Gītārthasaṅgraha of Abhinavagupta*, Tirupati, Sri Venkateswara University Oriental Research Institute, 1985, Vol., I, p. 281.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. XVII, fn. 5.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. XVIII, fn. 6.

²² *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 138.

tradition)". This may be the reason why Abhinavagupta chose the *Bhagavadgītā* out of the *prasthānatraya* to comment on, for he refers to it in his gloss on *guhyādgūhyataram* as *vedāntādapi guhyam* (XVIII.63).

He also offers the following as an additional reason: namely, that the *Gītā*, like the *Tantra*-s, is not restricted to the male members of the three higher castes (*dvija*-s) but, like Śivaism, is accessible to all, being a part of the *Mahābhārata*.²³ Moreover, according to the *śaiva* tradition, Kṛṣṇa was taught the *Śaivāgama*-s by sages Durvāsas and Upamanyu.²⁴

It is also possible to offer another reason. Abhinavagupta is as great a philosopher of aesthetics as of Śivaism. And although he regards *mokṣa* as the primary theme of both the *Mahābhārata* and the *Bhagavadgītā*, his predecessor Ānandavardhana had already established the *Mahābhārata* as a text pervaded by *śāntarasa* and as approaching the status of literature (*kāvya* *cchāyā*). This otherwise slim suggestion gains weight when one realizes that Abhinavagupta's preceptor in **both** his *Gītā* studies and the *dhvani* was the same person, namely, Bhaṭṭendurāja.²⁵

In other words, while the classical Vedantic tradition would impel Abhinavagupta in the direction of offering a univalent interpretation of the *Gītā*, there were other forces at work of equal strength which would have led him to accept the presupposition that it was a multivalent work. It seems that the actual commentary of Abhinavagupta turns out to be neither univalent or multivalent but bivalent in character. This bivalence or perhaps even ambivalence arises from an effort of his part to straddle both the exoteric and esoteric dimensions in his commentary. At some points his comments are straightforward but

Often he is very vague and at times quite consciously he writes in a cryptic manner. Yet, he feels sorry that he has disclosed too much of the ideas of the hidden tradition. He also tells us openly that the secret ideas he gives will be clear only to those who are initiated in the tradition of the *Śaiva* School.²⁶

Abhinavagupta, on the one hand, is so catholic in his approach that he interprets the word *avidhipūrvakam* as applied to those approaching Kṛṣṇa in *Bhagavadgītā* IX. 24, usually interpreted as 'with improper rites', as 'with different rites', thus validating all worship. Yet at other times he insists on constricting the understanding to that of the *sampradāya*, as in the concluding remarks on his gloss on *Bhagavadgītā*

²³ S. Sankaranarayanan, *op. cit.*, Part I, p. XXXVI fn. 2 and p. XXXVII fn. 1. One may note, however, that, technically the *Brahmasūtra* is also *smṛti*.

²⁴ K. C. Pandey, *Abhinavagupta: An Historical and Philosophical Study*, Varanasi, The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1963, p. 63.

²⁵ A. Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

²⁶ S. Sankaranarayanan, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. XXXIII.

IV.24. This approach in some ways curiously corresponds to the classical Vedic, as distinguished from the Vedantic, for Yāska distinguishes between higher and lower -- read esoteric and exoteric -- interpretations of the Vedic *mantra-s* (*uccāvacaīḥ abhiprāyaiḥ*).²⁷ The **text** is exoteric, the real **meaning** is esoteric!

6. Four roads of interpretations constituted the crossroad at which Abhinavagupta stood: what we have labelled the Vedic, the Vedantic, the epic and the epic-poetic. Out of these three presupposed multivalence, the Vedantic one alone presupposed univalence.

The influence of these various forces sorts itself out in his commentary as an implicit trivalence and an explicit bivalence. The implicit trivalence consists of his commentary unselfconsciously reflecting all the three hermeneutical layers of the epic: the historical, the psychological and the metaphysical. The explicit bivalence consists of his simultaneously espousing a catholic as well as an esoteric interpretation of the *Gītā*. When I translated his commentary, this complexity was concealed from me. This understanding was then not available to me and "understanding, obviously, can be communicated only to the extent that it is available."²⁸ Now, more than a decade later, let me try to place the matter on as broad a canvas as possible.'

Yāska said that speech without meaning is "a barren cow, a mere delusion (*adhenu māyā*)".²⁹ While commenting on the text in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*: "Meditate on Speech as a cow ... her calf is mind" (V.8.1). Śaṅkara said: "The word Speech means the *Veda-s*... It is the mind (the calf) which makes (stimulates) the *Veda-s* (the cow) to reveal its meaning (yield its milk) for the *Veda-s* proceed forward only in a subject thought of by the mind". In other words: "Unless its calf approaches a milch-cow, takes its teats into its mouth one after another, sucks, and gently butts its mother's udder with its head now and then, milk does not flow into its mouth. Similarly, only a mind which has become active and thought deeply and long about a relevant matter (e.g., Duty and/or the Real), can study the *Veda* and absorb and digest its meaning. To the unprepared inactive mind the *Veda* would mean nothing, just as a cow cannot give its milk to its calf which does not approach it and become active in the right manner."³⁰

The Mīmāṃsakas warned, however, that "A linguistic text is not the

²⁷ *Nirukta* VII. 2. See K. S. Murty, *op. cit.*, p. 18 fn. 23. On the different possible meanings of the negative particle see P. K. Gode and C. G. Karve, editors-in-chief, *Prin. V. S. Apte's the Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Poona, Prasad Prakashan, 1957, Vol. I, p. 1.

²⁸ K. K. Klostermaier, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

²⁹ *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. I, p. 293.

³⁰ K. S. Murty, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

legendary cow of paradise (*kāmadhenu*), which you could milk at will and endlessly".³¹ Although Abhinavagupta begged to differ in the realm of literature and considered great poetry "replete with richest meaning like the wishfulfilling cow" when he said: *mahākavivāco asyāḥ kāmadhenutvāt* (that a literary text is a semantic Santa Claus as it were).³² He milked only two udders in his commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā* (even though therein Kṛṣṇa identifies himself with the wish-fulfilling cow: *dhenūnām asmi kāmadhuk*). Finally, as a translator of his commentary on the *Gītā*, by virtue of the fact that almost any translation suffers from a deficit of meaning compared to the original, I became a purveyor of diluted, or should I say skimmed milk.

7. What is the significance of these conclusions for the translator of a commentary of Abhinavagupta's or of anyone else for that matter? If a translation is meant to convey the vision of the text which is being translated then I think it is important that the translator share that vision or less poetically, the mind-set of the author: that he or she know what the picture being linguistically reproduced is meant to be. When one is copying a drawing one may only draw a plain sketch or one may fill it with a horizon. But before one can make such a decision one must know how the original artist meant it to be: just a line or a line with a horizon. If the author had shaded his text with several horizons of meanings, then the translator must reflect that fact. The question is as much **how** one draws the line as **where** one draws the line. Please construe this last statement as my concluding remark.

³¹ V. K. Chari, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 272 fn. 78. Also see D. H. H. Ingalls, J. Mason and M. V. Patwardhan, trs., *The Dhvanyāloka of Ānandavardhana with the Locana of Abhinavagupta*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1990, p. 351.

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How to Enter the Vedic Mind? Strategies in Translating a *Brāhmaṇa* Text

by
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The text selected here is one that I edited and translated some twenty years ago: the *Kaṭha Āraṇyaka* (*KaṭhĀ*),¹ a *Brāhmaṇa* style text of the Black *Yajurveda*. In doing so, I had to go through all steps of dealing with a Vedic text: learning a new script, the *śāradā* of Kashmir, figuring out the unmarked ends of sentences and trying to understand their meaning, and interpreting the arcane *śrauta* ritual and the homologies of Vedic thought. All of this, in itself, is a most educational enterprise that I can only recommend to graduate students with the words of Louis Renou: "Où est le temps quand chaque sanskritiste éditait un texte védique..." In this paper, however, I will concentrate on translation, intertwined as it may be with the task of editing.

Before we even can attempt a translation of *Brāhmaṇa* texts, there are a number of procedures that must be discussed and several obstacles that must be overcome. Most of them can be taken care of by our old hand-maiden, philology. It is well-known that to merely mention this word is already the kiss of death in some circles, including Harvard. In fact, one of my colleagues here once explained philology to me as "the study of a word." I rather prefer to define it, as we did in a symposium some five years ago: as "*Kulturwissenschaft* based on texts", or "the study of a civilization based on texts".

In order to proceed with such a study, we have to take into account a number of factors: the nature and grammar of the Vedic language in its late *Brāhmaṇa*/*Āraṇyaka* stage; the setting of the text: its time, place, as well as the contemporary society, natural surroundings and climate; the style of the text: the typical *Brāhmaṇa*/*Āraṇyaka* prose with its many repetitions, the *Zwangsläufigkeit* ('inevitability') of its way of expression (see below); the parallel texts, the medieval exegesis (traditional commentators and **their** setting); the problems concerning the translation of certain Vedic words (see below); and finally, the difficulties in making the train of Vedic thought understandable and readable to our contemporary audience.

1. The Text and Its Background

Under investigation here is a late Vedic text, an *Āraṇyaka*. *Āraṇyaka*-s are a genre of texts that are composed in Archaic (Vedic) Sanskrit in the expository prose of the *Brāhmaṇa* style. The *KaṭhĀ* deals with one of the more secret and dangerous rituals of the Vedic period. Like all *Brāhmaṇa*-s, this is a text that was orally composed by **Brahmins for**

¹ M. Witzel, *Das Kaṭha Āraṇyaka, textkritische Edition mit Übersetzung und Kommentar (Teildruck)*, Erlangen/Kathmandu, Nepal Research Centre, 1974.

Brahmins in order to explain the many details of a particular ritual and the whole ritual as such. In this case, it is the Pravargya milk offering to the Aśvins, a part of the solemn Soma ritual.

A few remarks on Vedic oral composition and early oral literature are in place here. Unlike the hymns of the *Ṛgveda*, which were created by bard-like craftsmen schooled in traditional Indo-Iranian poetics, the *Brāhmaṇa*-s were composed by priests who were specialists in the complicated Vedic ritual.

This large mass of texts, rather surprisingly, was composed and compiled without recourse to any artificial means of structuring and ordering except for the underlying structure of the rituals themselves, which was, of course, well-known to the priests.² Nevertheless, the order of the ritual is not always strictly followed in the texts. Rather, various myths (*itihāsa*), deliberations (*arthavāda*), incidental allusions to the actions carried out in the rite (*vidhi*),³ and various other topics are inserted, all of which the authors felt necessary in order to explain the secret meaning of the ritual and its various parts, as well as the texts and melodies used during the actual performance.⁴ Sometimes one or the other of these aspects simply takes over and the originally clear structure of the section in question gets diluted beyond recognition (as often is the case with *itihāsa* in *JB*, and with *arthavāda* in *ŚB*), or various other topics are introduced, sometimes even in *Sūtra*-like style (as in the *Kaṭhā* itself). Also, various additions to the original ritual, such as second thoughts or rebuttals of objections abound in these texts. A *Brāhmaṇa* simply does not strictly follow the order of the ritual;⁵ it is not a *sūtra*-like step-by-step **description** of a ritual, but a *ṭippanī*-like **discussion** of

² One did not follow, as for example in Polynesia, external categories, e.g. the structure of a fish on whose bones various types of knowledge, stories, etc. are mentally arranged, similar to the device used in classical antiquity, for example a palace in whose rooms various types of knowledge were "stored." One could also envisage other mnemotechnical devices, such as lines drawn on the ground or the use of pebbles (or twigs which are actually used in *Sāmaveda* chanting); however, there is no evidence of these kinds of techniques in the Vedic texts themselves.

³ As the later *Mīmāṃsā* texts classify these items found in the *Brāhmaṇa* style texts. Note, however, that the "*vidhi*" elements in the *Brāhmaṇa*-s do not prescribe ritual action, they merely refer or allude to them to indicate the topic of discussion.

⁴ See K. Hoffmann, "Die Komposition eines Brāhmaṇa-Abschnittes (MS. I 10,14-16)", *Aufsätze zur Indo-Iranistik*, ed. J. Narten, Wiesbaden (Reichert) 1975, pp. 207-220; author, "JB *Palpālānī*. The structure of a Brāhmaṇa tale", *Felicitation Volume B. R. Sharma*, ed. M. D. Balasubrahmaniam, Tirupati, Kendriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha, 1986, 189-216.

⁵ Differently from what Kashikar attempted to show in his article on the *Kaṭha Āraṇyaka*, *ABORI* 68 (1987), where he silently contradicted his general

particular points in the performance and of their meaning.

Many features of the texts still point to their oral composition, for example, the use of deictic pronouns. When the texts say "do it in that way...", we simply do not know what **that way** means. Further, the older *Brāhmaṇa* style texts were composed in simple paratactic phrases, and only gradually the language became hypotactic with longer and involved phrases found especially in late *Brāhmaṇa* texts such as *ŚB* and *JB*.

Equally typical for the oral compositions of this period is the repetitive style, the *Zwangsläufigkeit*, which closely resembles that of the ensuing early Buddhist texts. The subject matter is discussed by adducing several examples that are formulated in virtually the same way, through using the same words, phrases, and order of argumentation. Thus, the next sentence or group of sentences are not only largely predictable. The device also serves as a mnemo-technical device that allows for remembering, teaching and learning by heart long prose passages more easily.

Another mnemo-technical device is the constant use of *pratīka*-s, the short heading-like introductory phrases of a prose section or of a *mantra* which immediately evoke the complete passage. Surprisingly, even internal references are met with on occasion, for example *ŚB* 4.1.5.15 --> *ŚB* 14.1.1, a referral to a text that now is found a few hundred pages apart from the first one in our printed editions.

We can even determine that *Brāhmaṇa* texts were composed on the offering ground itself. Some references mentioning the three sacred fires, which are arranged on the offering ground in a slightly irregular triangular fashion, indicate that the speaker (i.e. the teacher) stood between the two fires that were close together, the *gārhapatya* and the *dakṣiṇāgni* (the western and southern fires) when explaining the ritual to his young Brahmin students.⁶ The teacher apparently carried out a dry run of the ritual for his students.

Both types of texts, the poetic *RV* and the expository *Brāhmaṇa*-s, however, had the same strict means of preservation and transmission: rather surprisingly, in both cases, a strictly oral one. This is a well known topic and it therefore may suffice to point out that just as in the transmission of the *RV*, the *Brāhmaṇa* type texts were handed down from teacher to students as virtual "tape recordings" of the first millennium B.C. without the change of a word, of a syllable, or even an accent. If one did so, one would have faced the terrible example of Viśvarūpa whose head was cut off by Indra as he had mispronounced a single accent, thereby grammatically turning Indra into his enemy.

statement in *A Survey of the Śrautasūtras*, Bombay, University of Bombay, 1968, p. 15 sq.

⁶ Incidentally, this is the place where the wife of the sponsor of a Vedic sacrifice is seated; it is different from that of the various priests taking part in the ritual.

Let us return to the *Kaṭha Āraṇyaka*. It was composed during the late Vedic period. This means that the great collections of Vedic hymns (*R̥gveda*), sorcery stanzas (*Atharvaveda*), melodies (*Sāmaveda*), and formulae spoken during the rituals (*Yajurveda*) had long been composed and collected, and that a considerable amount of theological discussion of the rituals had already been accumulated in the various *Brāhmaṇa* style texts.

Among these, the *Kaṭha Āraṇyaka* is a rather fragmentary text⁷ dealing with the secret Pravargya ritual of the Kaṭha school of the Black *Yajurveda*. Among the various *Yajurveda* schools, only the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* (TĀ 4-5) and the last section of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (ŚB 14) deal with the Pravargya ritual in *Brāhmaṇa* style while *Maitrāyaṇī Samhitā* (MS 4.9) contains only the *mantra*-s. The TĀ, while often close to the *KaṭhĀ* in its *mantra*-s, is a rather late text, and the ŚB belongs to the White YV, a different tradition that is equally late but much more inclusivistic and reformist. Only the ŚB section, which is quite different in wording from the *KaṭhĀ*, had been translated at the time I dealt with *KaṭhĀ*.⁸ At any rate, it has been our experience that the parallel texts usually are the best commentary⁹ of *Brāhmaṇa* style text. They mention the same facts with a more or less differing choice of words or give a completely different exposition, both of which shed light on the topic under discussion.

Apart from the parallel texts, the various *ŚrautaSūtra*-s, though composed later than the *Brāhmaṇa*-s are of help as they do more than allude to the ritual performance; they present it step by step. Unfortunately the *ŚrautaSūtra* of the Kaṭha-s is almost completely lost and I had to rely on the texts of the more or less closely related schools of the *Taittirīyas* and *Maitrāyaṇīyas* of the Black *Yajurveda*.

Finally, there are the medieval commentaries and *Paddhati*-s. They too supply much information about the actual performance of ritual during the middle ages. Since Vedic ritual is very conservative, we can rely to a large extent on their testimony, but we constantly have to countercheck their descriptions with that of the older texts so as to detect medieval innovations.¹⁰ Generally speaking, one has to be aware of the fact that the medieval commentators were almost as distant from

⁷ It is not a *sūtra*-like step by step description of a ritual, but a *ṭippanī*-like discussion of particular points in the performance and their meaning.

⁸ In the meantime, J. E. M. Houben has translated the TĀ section as well: *The Pravargya Brāhmaṇa of the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka an ancient commentary on the Pravargya ritual*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1991.

⁹ Both the TĀ and the ŚB version have medieval commentaries of Sāyaṇa and others. The *KaṭhĀ* lacks any commentary, *Padapāṭha*, *Prātiśākhya*, etc.

¹⁰ Nowadays we might add the films and the video tapes of Staal's 1975 *Agnicayana* in Kerala which includes several Pravargya performances.

the ancient Vedic texts as we are nowadays: in time, location, society, religion, climate and natural surroundings. For example, the great commentator Śāyaṇa (d. 1387 A.D.) was a citizen of the last great Hindu empire of Vijayanagara, a medieval Hindu kingdom of South India with a full blown caste system, Bhakti/Tantric Hindu religion, a tropical climate dominated by monsoon, and an economy based on rice agriculture, crafts, and trade. This is quite different from being a member of one of the small tribal, pastoral societies of the Eastern Panjab without or with only an incipient caste system, a pre-Hindu religion, a cold winter, no real monsoon, without cities, and with an economy based on cattle herding. While the medieval commentaries can help us in understanding the ritual and some of the grammar, syntax, and the general background of the texts, they cannot be relied on for the exact interpretation of individual words, of *Brāhmaṇa* sentences, and even less for the meaning of the archaic *mantra*-s, the original meaning of the rituals, and of Vedic religion and myth in general.

What we have before us, thus, is the unfortunately fragmentary text of an old *Yajurveda* school of the eastern Panjab surviving in Kashmir without a living tradition of recitation and exegesis.¹¹ The *Kaṭhā* has come down to us only in one rather lacuneous birchbark ms. This puts certain limits to any sort of investigation and it added some additional constraints to my task of translation. I had to supply, as is the case with the translation of most Mesopotamian and Hittite texts on clay tablets, much of the lost text portions for consistency and continuity. I even did not know exactly how my text began, and its end was even more uncertain. While this certainly is not typical for Vedic texts, it presents some additional problems.

Taking all of the preceding into account, I first had to establish a reliable edition, which is difficult with just one ms. but can be established by carefully comparing the parallel traditions, ritual, style, and the Vedic grammar of the period in question. As has been mentioned, I proceeded in constant overlap with the actual translation since one obviously cannot establish an intelligible text without knowing its meaning, and that means without at least preparing a rough translation in the process. The most intriguing and difficult part of this undertaking was to translate according to the **original intent** of the composers of the text. One has to enter the **Vedic mind** in order to be able to achieve this aim.¹² There are, however, several stages of work that usually precede this most difficult part of the translation process.

¹¹ The *Kaṭha* school has been confined to Kashmir for the last millenium or so in the later part of which they have lost their oral tradition. For details, see author, *The Veda in Kashmir*, (forthcoming).

¹² This is quite apart from the problem of translating concepts and even single words typical of the source language (Sanskrit) which are not present in the target language (English, or in my case, German).

2. Grammatical or Literal Translation

For many purposes, such as grammatical study, it often is sufficient to prepare a rough, that is a grammatically correct literal translation without understanding **exactly** what the implications of the passage are. For example, one can, without much actual understanding, some of which is supplied here in parentheses and brackets, translate *KaṭhĀ* 2.10: *īyaty āgra āsīr īty. yād varāhāvihatam bhāvaty, asyā evā jīvāṃ yajñīyaṃ sambharati... yād valmīkavapānāṃ sāmbaraty, asyā evā tējo yajñīyaṃ sāmbarati*. "(He [the YV priest, the 2ryu,] mumbles):¹³ 'you [fem.] were so large in the beginning'. When earth dug up by a boar is used (*bhavati*)¹⁴ [in the preparation of the Pravargya clay vessel] he (the priest) brings together the earth dug up by a boar... When he brings together the (clay of) a termite hill, he collects the life of her (the earth) fit for sacrifice". By proceeding in this fashion, we can be sure to have captured the literal meaning (and to even have supplied some of the ritual details), but we do not need to care about the religious or mythological implications of the passage. In fact, it refers to one of the creation myths in which the earth was dug up from the bottom of the sea by a boar, the later form of Viṣṇu. The story is a variant of the North American and Siberian diver myths. The clay has to be pure or cleansed to be usable in the ritual (as is the case still in modern Kashmiri cleansing rites). All of this we do not need to know for a simple, grammatical translation, but, of course, we need it for a proper **understanding** of the text and an interpretation of the underlying ritual.

Actually, this passage is a typical example of *Brāhmaṇa* style. It "explains", so to say, a formula spoken in the course of the ritual by pointing out its mythological origin (*itihāsa*): **illo tempore**, the gods did thus, and therefore humans have to follow suit; this is the message. Since the story is well known (and actually referred to in the preceding and following passages), no further explanation is necessary, and it is indeed not provided by the author of *KaṭhĀ*. In using this procedure, the *Brāhmaṇa*-s¹⁵ created a web of ritualistic discussion, interwoven with myths, referrals to ritual facts, explanations of the origin of customs, cultural objects, the surrounding nature, facts of tribal history, and many other items of their contemporary ambience.

¹³ Note that we must already know beforehand, from the study of *Yajurveda* texts in general, that it is the Adhvaryu priest and not someone else who mumbles but does not recite this formula.

¹⁴ *Bhavati*, 'is used', is a typical expression of the *Brāhmaṇa* style texts, while otherwise *bhavati* usually means 'he/she/it becomes'.

¹⁵ See K. Hoffmann, "Die Komposition eines *Brāhmaṇa*-Abschnittes, (MS. I 10, 14-16)", *Aufsätze zur Indo-Iranistik*, ed. J. Narten, Wiesbaden (Reichert) 1975, pp. 207-220.

3. Some Vedic Peculiarities

While straightforward, literal translations may suffice in many cases, certain Vedic peculiarities of language and style nevertheless present further problems. The seemingly easily understandable phrase *iyam gauḥ* cannot simply be translated literally into "this cow". The two words rather mean: "The earth is this one here (i.e. a female object, being)". One first has to notice, first, that this is a nominal sentence and not just a noun with its pronoun; secondly, one has to know that the subject of nominal clauses is put at the end of the phrase;¹⁶ thirdly that *iyam* habitually refers to "this one here", the earth; and fourthly, that "cow" can signify (among many other things) "earth" as well. The sentence, thus, is a tautology. In addition, to approach an understanding, we have to know something of the nature of Vedic "identifications" or homologies. For reasons of space I cannot go into details here. Oldenberg¹⁷ has extensively written about this topic under the heading "Prescientific science".¹⁸ The matter may be summarized as follows: any two objects, ideas, entities can be linked with each other by establishing connections of smaller or greater similarity (*bandhu*, *nidāna*) between them. Then they are not only regarded as linked but as essentially "identical" -- at least within the framework of the ritual. Whatever is done to one object or entity affects the other. Ritual is the mesocosm that links and affects the macrocosm of the universe and the gods with the microcosm of the humans and their immediate surroundings. The identifications or homologies can cover a single aspect of the two or three entities involved (even the number of syllables of the word signifying both entities) or they can cover a larger number of such links. To discover them is the aim of much of the discussion in the *Brāhmaṇa* style texts. The outcome can be such as the one mentioned above: "The cow is the earth."

Of the initial list of concerns noted in translating this text, we have already dealt with some of the ritual and mythological background, which for want of space, I will not discuss further. We have also seen how some of the myths are interwoven with the text and how we need to pay attention to them in interpreting a *Brāhmaṇa*. Furthermore, it goes without saying that we have to know a large amount of the *realia* of the period, whether it is items of cattle herding, local climate, tribal society,

¹⁶ A feature not restricted to Vedic but also found in good Pāṇinian Sanskrit.

¹⁷ H. Oldenberg, *Vorwissenschaftliche Wissenschaft. Die Weltanschauung der Brāhmaṇa-Texte*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Rupprecht, 1919.

¹⁸ See now my *On magical thought in the Veda*, Leiden, Universitaire Pers, 1979, where I tried to understand some of the thought processes underlying the Brāhmaṇical "identifications". Cf. also B. K. Smith, *Reflections on Resemblance, Ritual and Religion*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1989, who has, however, not added to our understanding of the problems except for providing a fashionable framework.

or ancient customs and beliefs.

4. Literary structure

For a different level of understanding, we have to deal with the literary structure of the texts themselves, which is, as I have already mentioned, rather complicated. One has to follow the arguments sometimes not just over a page or two of our printed texts but through a whole chapter¹⁹ to recognize the many disjointed parts (as we would feel) of the exposition. In the mind of the Brahmin authors these sections were not disjointed at all, as they more or less closely followed the only grid they had at their disposal: the structure of the ritual. Myths, ritual discussions, deliberations, quotations from earlier texts, and especially Mantras were all subjected to this outline.

One item that comes to our rescue in following such arguments and in our actual understanding of them, and indeed the most important one that came to my rescue in restoring the partially damaged text, is the so-called *Zwangsläufigkeit* of *Brāhmaṇa* style. This expression coined by K. Hoffmann signifies the "inevitability of *Brāhmaṇa* style". The argumentation in the texts almost always follows a certain fixed pattern. For example, one normally starts with a statement, something "new" or important to the teacher, often the discovery of new connection between the various entities in macrocosm, mesocosm and microcosm. Its authoritative statement ("x, I say, is y") is usually indicated by the particle *vai*: A straightforward case that involves nothing that cannot be understood immediately is found in *KaṭhĀ* 2.2. It discusses the collection, with the help of wooden hoes, of the clay from which the Pravargya vessel is made. "He takes up the hoes. ... He takes up four (of them). The directions (of the sky), I say (*vái*), are four. From the (various) directions (the clay for) the Pravargya (vessel) is collected. Only (*evá*) from the (various) directions he collects (the clay for) the Pravargya (vessel). Wooden (hoes) are used. With 'trees' (wooden hoes) is the Pravargya collected. Only (*evá*) with 'trees' (wooden hoes) he collects the Parvargya (vessel)." [*ábhṛīr ádatte. ... cátaśra ádatte. cátaśra vái díśo. digbhyáḥ pravargyàs sám̐bhriyate. digbhyá evá pravargyàṁ sám̐bharaty. vānāspatyā bhavanti. vānāspátibhir vái pravargyàs sám̐bhriyate. vānāspátibhir evá pravargyà sám̐bharati.*] What follows the initial assertion is an argument (or, often a mythological tale) that shows in what respect the hoes are related to the directions and the trees. This is regarded as the proof of the argument. The author usually returns to the initial statement and presents it as truth: "x **only** is y".

This structure of *Brāhmaṇa* argumentation necessarily implies that certain sentences have to be repeated either verbatim or in a slightly changed way. If the text is damaged (as in *KaṭhĀ*) or corrupt (as in the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa*), this device greatly helps in restoring or understanding the section in question. If one does not immediately

¹⁹ See again K. Hoffmann, "Die Komposition...", cit.

understand what the author wanted to say, one can also reread the passage backwards, from the end of the argumentation: whatever is told in the myth or in the often rather obscure discussions is informed by this outcome. This procedure is especially helpful when the pattern described above is incomplete, which is quite often the case, since well known "truths" are no longer argued at great length, e.g. in *KaṭhĀ* 2.140,180 (*ātmāna evāitām āśiṣam āśāste*). The *Brāhmaṇa* teacher assumes that his listeners already know.

5. Style and Translation

Another problem is that of the style of our translation. It still is a fashion among scholars in Indian Studies to resort to Shakespearean English when translating religious texts from India. But should we really do so? Even in the later Vedic period, many *mantra*-s quoted from earlier texts such as the *Ṛgveda* were easily understandable. For example, a *mantra* such as *īyaty āgra āsīḥ* (*KaṭhĀ* 2.10) could be regarded as contemporary Vedic Sanskrit by any educated Brahmin listener while groups such as children, women, and members of the lower classes might have regarded such phrases as "adult", educated, and prestigious speech. Why, therefore, should we write "thou wert so large in the beginning" and not simply "so large you were in the beginning"?

It is, of course, quite another matter when the formula or verse in question uses a level of speech older than that of the expository prose of the text. We may try to imitate the distinction in English, though this might prove difficult at times. Thus, when the *Brāhmaṇa* explanation of the *mantra* *divī te sadhāstam* (*KaṭhĀ* 2.99) paraphrases this with *divī te grhām*, we might try to imitate the two levels of speech by translating: "in heaven is your seat", (that means:) in heaven is your house". The case actually is more complicated because the word *sadhāstha* 'dwelling/seat' is more archaic (it is prominent in the RV) and, secondly because it differs in meaning from *grhā* 'house'. How to imitate this in English? If we translate the first sentence as "in heaven is your palace/throne" we express some of the archaic level of speech of *sadhāstha* but we do not exactly indicate the meaning of the type of dwelling meant in RV (which is in need of a separate investigation).

Or, to enter a sphere in which Wendy Doniger specializes: *KaṭhĀ* 2.101 has the *mantra* *anavadhyābhis sām u jagmābhiḥ* explained as: *tābhir (hotrābhir) eva pravargyām sāṅgamayati*. "with the blameless (Apsaras) he (Rudra) has come together" (i.e., among other things, 'had intercourse', see PS 1.7). (This means:) "with them (not the Apsaras but the recitations, *hotrābhiḥ*, this time) he (the priest) lets (him, the sponsor) get together". I do not think that we must, as Wendy Doniger prefers, always find a "hip" translation such as "he had sex." We simply can translate "he has come together" -- just as the Sanskrit says -- and only where we need to be explicit, we could add "he made love with..." as to explain the double meaning in the original.

6. "Ambiguous" Words

A much more difficult problem is that of "ambiguous" words such as *ṛta*. Like *dharma*, *ṛta* is very difficult to translate.²⁰ In fact, *ṛta* is variously translated as 'cosmic law, rule, order, human law, customs', etc. There simply is no English, French, German, Italian, or Russian word that covers the range of meanings of this word. The case is not isolated; it is a well known problem in translating from other languages. For example French *liberté* or German *Freiheit*, Italian *libertà* or Spanish *libertad* correspond to both English 'freedom' and 'liberty'. Each time we want to translate, for example, the German, or French word, we have to choose the proper English equivalent, just as we have to do with *ṛta*, where we could simply choose from among the translations mentioned above. However, in this case a reader will never know what is found in the Sanskrit original, and we would have to explain each time (e.g. in a footnote) that *ṛta* is intended.

Thieme has proposed another solution to this problem. He translates words such as *ṛta* by **just one** German or English word, thus 'Wahrheit'/'truth'. However, neither the German nor the English word covers the whole range of meanings of the Vedic word *ṛta*. If we translate *ṛta* by "Wahrheit/truth/Truth" we would have to relearn our own language for the sake of reading Vedic texts, -- just as Heidegger imposes on us through his idiosyncratic use of German when we read his philosophy. Actually, it seems that no western language has a word more or less corresponding to *ṛta*. As far as I see, it is only the Old Egyptian *ma'at* (and perhaps Sumerian *me*) that convey a similar concept.

What then, does *ṛta* mean? We can approach the problem from its antonym: *druh*. This is easily translatable into English as 'deceiving, cheating' or better into German with the etymologically related words 'Trug, Betrug' (cf. Engl. 'betray'). Deceiving means to say the untruth (*anṛta*) and to actively carry it out (*druh*). The other side of the coin is speaking the truth (*satya*) and acting according to it (*ṛta*). *Ṛta* thus is a force opposite to **deception**, it is the **force of active truth** (*Wahrheitsverwirklichung*). Only **because** of *ṛta* does the sun move in the sky and does not fall down, do the rivers flow in their beds, does human society function, do people speak the truth and carry out their obligations and alliances (*mitra*), do sons offer for their departed fathers and ancestors. Without *ṛta* we enter into the state of *Nirṛti*,²¹ of absolute destruction with no light, no food, no drink, no children, a sort of Vedic hell to which only those miscreants are sent who have violated the basic order of Vedic society.

²⁰ In *Kaṭhā* 2.9. "*ṛtāsya rdhyāsam adyā makhāsya śīraḥ*" "today I want to complete the head of Makha, which I came by (*ṛtāsya*) accidentally" another word *ṛtā-* is meant, p.p. of *ṛchati*.

²¹ See L. Renou, *Vedic nirṛti, L'Inde fondamentale*, Paris, Hermann, 1978, pp. 127-132.

How to translate *ṛta* then? We cannot put 'active truth' (*Wahrheitsverwirklichung*) into our text each time; this would at least be cumbersome. And, our readers still would not understand what is intended in the Sanskrit text. Another possibility would be to leave the word untranslated. For the general reader this would mean that important portions of the text remain equally unclear and this cannot be the aim of our work. The best solution to me seems to translate *ṛta* idiomatically but to add the Sanskrit word in parentheses each time, as to allow the reader to gradually understand the concept of *ṛta* with the **whole range** of meanings it implies.

7. Inside the Vedic Mind

With *ṛta* and similar problematic words we have come to one of the more important and difficult chapters of translating Vedic texts. Yet, we still will face a host of problems if we want to translate the argumentation of the texts in an understandable fashion and not in the (often Victorian) "jargon" of Vedic scholars. The real task, however, is how to enter the Vedic mind, the mind of those Brahmins who composed poetry and prose texts such as the *Kaṭha Āraṇyaka*. With some effort,²² we can see that their logic is understandable, more or less Aristotelian, if we accept that the ultimate premise of the texts is wrong, namely **similarity means near-complete identity**, and not just 'partial identity', at least in the sphere of the ritual.²³ As we know, the *Brāhmaṇa* style texts are full of "identifications", of homologies made between various entities which are based on this principle, which, incidentally, is also the one underlying all magical procedures.

The whole web of links established on this premise between various entities in macrocosm, microcosm, and the mesocosm of ritual has to be known or acquired by a translator of a Vedic text; the same applies to the range of meanings, or, in more technical terms the **aggregates of noemes**²⁴ that are associated in the Vedic mind with each Sanskrit word.²⁵ They have to be **actively** known by the translator. Only then can

²² Leaving aside the surprise of former generations of scholars who regarded these texts as the "twaddling of idiots"; for a characterization see author, *On Magical Thought in the Veda*, Leiden, Universitaire Pers, 1979, p. 1.

²³ See author, *On Magical Thought*, cit.; note that many of the "identifications" are similes or rather metaphors that cover, in the ritual framework *only*, anything from partial to complete identity of the two entities. They are based, to use a Pāṇinian term, on *ādeśa* "substitution" of one item by another in the related spheres of the cosmos that the *Upaniṣad*-s refer to by the terms *adhidaivata*, *adhiyajña*, *adhipuruṣa*.

²⁴ See K. Hoffmann, *Der Injunktiv im Veda*, Heidelberg, Carl Winter, 1967.

²⁵ Or the words of other Sanskrit, foreign, or, for that matter, even older English texts such as those of Shakespeare.

we **begin** to understand what certain statements in the text meant to their authors and listeners. Luckily, *Brāhmaṇa* prose is explicit enough to provide us with an inkling of the possible range of mental connections made for each word, although we may be surprised time and again about the enormous range, the seemingly strange links, and the unusual shades of meanings that are employed by the authors.

But how to accumulate an encyclopedic knowledge of Vedic thought? Certainly by a lot of (slow) reading. Even then, many connections and shades of meanings will escape us. Instead, we have to painstakingly follow the well known rules of philology by studying the meaning, or rather, the whole range of meanings and the usage of the particular word or concept in question. However, in Vedic Studies at least, we are lucky in that we have a (nearly) complete word index, prepared in India from 1935-1965 by Vishva Bandhu and his collaborators.²⁶ Whoever does not use this index can simply no longer claim to have done thorough work but only to have carried out work of an impressionistic nature.²⁷

If we face the problem of determining a particular noematic aggregate, all shades of the meaning of a word or concept in Vedic, we are even luckier. Since 1966 we have had access to the *Brāhmaṇoddhāraakośa*²⁸ which actually lists Vedic sentences under important, alphabetically arranged headwords though, unfortunately, by no means comprehensively. If we want to get a quick overview of the range of meanings of a word we can simply look up some five to two hundred sentences under each headword²⁹ and arrive at a provisional, yet quite often sufficient impression, which, if need be, can further be substantiated by painstakingly going through all of Vishva Bandhu's *Vedic Word Index*. In this fashion, and due to the large number of texts available to us, we have a real possibility to "interview" our Vedic "informants" of three millennia ago and to enter their mind as well as any anthropologist can do.

If we follow these rather straightforward rules and use all the other tools mentioned earlier, we can achieve in Vedic Studies a certainty that approaches that of the natural sciences. In fact, we can proceed in a similar fashion, by trial and error, and by proposing a theory and actually testing it. Only when the word, concept, or custom is a *hapax* or is attested too **infrequently** to allow a proper investigation of the whole

²⁶ Vishva Bandhu, *Vaidika Padānukrama Kośa* (A Vedic Word Concordance), 16 Vols., Lahore/Hoshiarpur, Vishveshvaranand Vedic Research Institute, 1935-1965.

²⁷ It is educative to note how little this or similar important indices are quoted.

²⁸ Vishva Bandhu, *Brāhmaṇoddhāraakośa*, Hoshiarpur, VVRI, 1966; see also *Upaniṣaduddhāraakośa*, Hoshiarpur, VVRI, 1972.

²⁹ Curiously (cf. the preceding notes), I have never seen this work quoted in any article or book.

range of meanings, must we remain content with a merely **probable** answer, or a **mere guess**. In all other cases, of course only after painstaking study, we can conclude that **yes** the theory was right, or **no** it was not.

If it sounds unbelievable that we can actually enter the Vedic mind and argue from the inside, following the thought pattern of the Vedic authors, I invite the reader to try the beginning of the *Kaṭha Āraṇyaka*. As the facsimile shows, it is rather fragmentary. In order to restore and to translate the text, I had to study similar phrases or the occurrences of a few key words retained in the fragment. The restoration was supported by the *Zwangsläufigkeit* of *Brāhmaṇa* style: the initial, half peeled off sentence is more or less repeated by a later one. But how to be sure? Fortunately, the passage contains another clue, the frequently met with concepts of "thought-speech-action" (*manas- vāc- karman*), a collocation that is found not only in the Veda but also in the closely related Old Iranian texts (*manah- vāc- šiiioθna*, Y 34.1-2). Therefore, I was completely sure that I had restored the text correctly. When I finally went to Tübingen University Library to check the original ms. again (I had worked from a microfilm), I found that a portion of my initial lacuna was covered by a small, dislodged piece of birchbark that had overlapped with my text. When I lifted the dislodged fragment, I found the text I had restored.

If we can **write** Vedic texts that well, we can also **translate** them.

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